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Dance and Dancers

OCTOBER 1956

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of ballet and record recitals for clubs and societies must find it of special value, while all lovers of music for the ballet will enjoy browsing through these pages which are interspersed with articles by Pigeon Crowie that are both informative and entertaining. These articles are well illustrated with photographs, and I especially liked a fine action shot of George Skibine and the charming First Act picture for *Coppelia*. The cover is an excellent colour reproduction of Degas' famous ballerina with its glimpse of the corps de ballet in the wings. In all, very good value for one shilling." *Ballet Today*.

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DANCE AND DANCERS

Dance and Dancers

Editor: PETER WILLIAMS

Assistant Editor: CLIVE A. BARNES

WORLD'S LARGEST SALE IN THE FIELD

Watch the Russians

IT is doubtful whether in the past history of ballet in England there has been queueing for three nights to book tickets. But this happened at Covent Garden for the Bolshoi season and ever since then people have been scrambling around in their endeavours to pay for the privilege of seeing this great company on its first visit to Western Europe. After so much feverish anticipation and effort, a certain reaction may well set in when the company actually appears.

Few of us have seen this company and our idea of it comes from films or travellers' tales. Some of us are afraid that it is all going to be too academic and old-fashioned—but wait a minute! The fault may lie with us and it may be here in the West that we have become stuck in a rut and have mummified the classics into museum pieces. Before we say that what we see is not "the Russian school we knew," let us remember that the old Russian school was still a mixture of the French and the Italian. In the intervening years between Diaghilev and now, the Russians have built up on their own tradition and not just stood still. Remember, apart from anything else, that it is *their* school you are going to see.

We are to be shown four full-length ballets, two of which—*Romeo and Juliet* and *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai*—are contemporary works. Now, it has been said that Soviet ballet lacks good contemporary choreographers; but before we dismiss them thus we should take a careful look at both these works and see if the choreography is not an extension of the classical vocabulary used in much the same way as Balanchine and Ashton have used and extended it. After all, the classical vocabulary is the basis of all classical ballet and is a living thing that must continually evolve.

Of the classics, we shall see *Giselle* and *Swan Lake*. We in Europe have seen innumerable productions of the former but undoubtedly there will be many differences in the Russian version, in addition to which we shall be hearing the full score unknown in our versions. It should also be remembered that *Giselle* owes its preservation to the Russians. Again, with *Swan Lake*, every effort is being made to reproduce Tchaikovsky's intentions as closely as possible, though no doubt seen through the eyes of the contemporary Russian school. None of this strikes me as being moribund.

If we do not care much for the designing of these ballets, then do not let us allow this to distract attention from the dancing. If we concentrate on the dancing—which, after all, is the aspect of Soviet ballet on which its eminence is based—the struggle for tickets will almost certainly have been worth while. Above all, don't let us make the mistake, as did the Paris critics at the opening of the Stanislavsky Ballet, of dismissing everything because there may be certain features of the Bolshoi Ballet that do not fit in with our preconceived ideas.

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At a party given by Anton Dolin and John Gilpin at Le Petit Club Français, for the entire Ballet Theatre company during its London season. Photo: Roy Round

Lucia Chase

LUCIA CHASE is not a bank. The only thing which she and the famous American banking firm have in common is that they are both rich—but in different commodities. True, Chase (Lucia) had a million dollars, and was able to call on more if she needed it, when with Richard Pleasant she formed Ballet Theatre in 1939. Whether she placed it all with the Chase (Bank), history does not record. But this amount of money is not much upon which to run a large ballet company with a very extensive repertoire. Lucia Chase's real richness lies in what she has been able to bring to America and the world at large.

Her first impact is deceptive. An informal and cosy appearance hides one of the shrewdest business brains in the whole of ballet. She makes you think of an enthusiastic amateur you might have met from a remote hamlet who is touring her little group of toe-dancers around the Lake District. Actually she has kept a very large company, with the finest dancers in the world at its head and one of the most distinguished ballet repertoires, on its feet (if occasionally a little off point) for 16 years. The reason for its continuance through triumphs and depressions, the lot of every company, is entirely Lucia Chase's business sense and drive.

A pupil of Mikhail Mordkin and a ballerina in the Mordkin Ballet, Lucia Chase decided to move from the smaller group to form a bigger, full-scale company—Ballet Theatre. Originally a very good dancer, she now appears infrequently on the stage, though her performances in *Three Virgins and a Devil* and *Fall River Legend* at Covent Garden during the company's recent season show her still to be a very fine artist of the theatre.

When Ballet Theatre came under the aegis of impresario Sol Hurok in the early 'forties, Lucia learned most of what it takes to run a company. So when Hurok and Ballet Theatre parted company, she was in a strong enough position to take most of the organising on her own shoulders. Mistakes were made but she battled through rather in the same way as have Dame Ninette de Valois and Marie Rambert in England. Lucia has been helped by the Ballet Theatre Foundation and the company's world tours have been made possible by the International Exchange Programme of the American Department of State, while the company now has a school and a workshop. But it is due to the integrity she has brought to, and the loyalty she inspires in, the company that has really made Ballet Theatre what it is today—a great American company which gladly opens its doors to the greatest international dancers and choreographers.

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who, together with his company, gives a season at the Palace Theatre, London, from September 18 for two months. This is his fifth season in London—the first two being with Rosario, his partner of many years, the others with the large group he has formed.



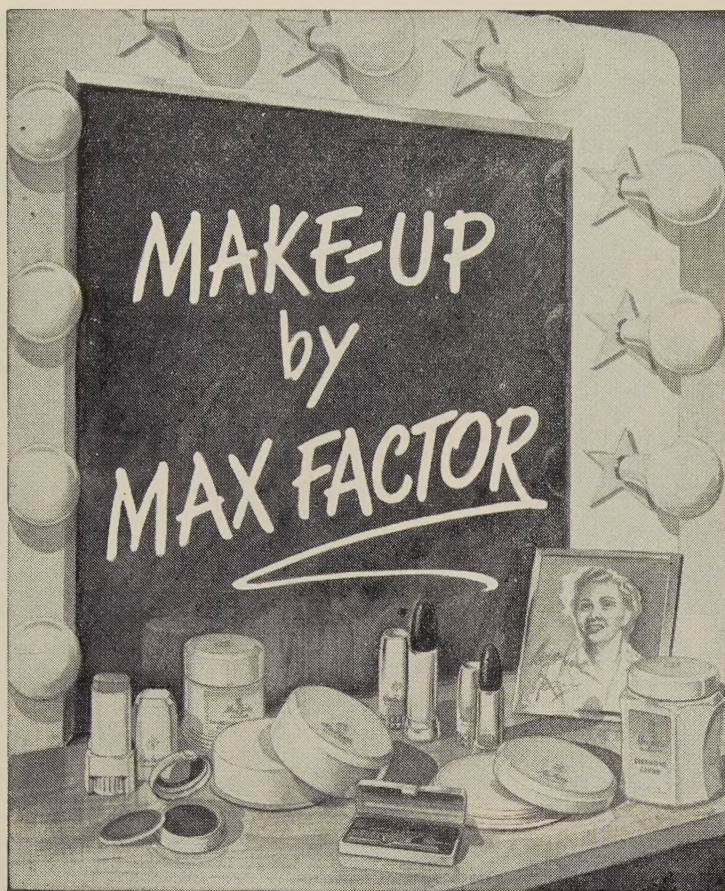
ANTONIO WITH CARMEN ROJAS in one of their several Flamenco numbers.

Top right: *EL AMOR BRUJO*. Antonio, as Carmelo, with some of the male dancers in his company in Manuel de Falla's ballet.

Right: With Rosita Segovia, as *Candelas*, in another scene from *El Amor Brujo*.



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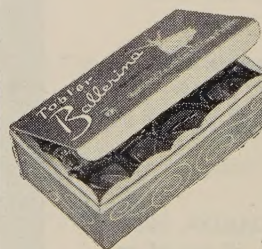
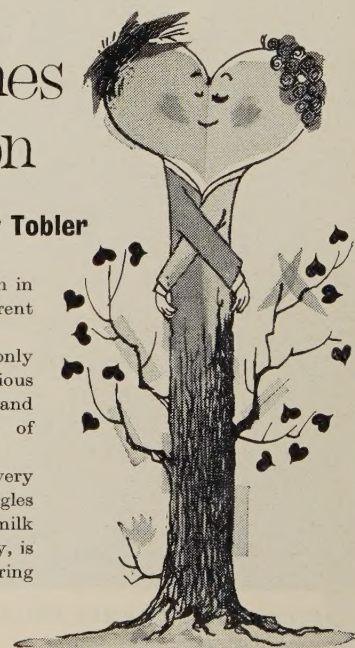
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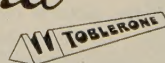


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MOSCOW PREVIEW

HELENE KIRSOVA, formerly ballerina of the De Basil Company and founder of the Kirsova Australian Ballet, recently visited Moscow and Leningrad to collect material for her book, *Ballet in Moscow Today*, published by Thames & Hudson to coincide with the Bolshoi Ballet's season at the Covent Garden Opera House.

Here she answers some of the questions put to her about this company and about ballet in Russia today.

THERE can be little doubt that the announcement that the famous Bolshoi Company would visit London has caused more excitement, speculation and discussion in ballet circles throughout the Western world than any other ballet event since the first appearance of Diaghilev's company at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris in 1909.

This was the news all had been waiting and hoping for since the end of the First World War. But if excitement has reached unprecedented heights in the ballet capitals of London, New York, Paris and Copenhagen, it is no less intense in Moscow and Leningrad, where the promised return visit to Moscow of the Covent Garden Company is being just as eagerly awaited and discussed by dancers and the general public.

Only a few days after the publication of this issue, the British public and many from other countries visiting London specially for the occasion will have at last seen the fabulous Ulanova with Struchkova, Yermolayev, Lapauri and many others. Critics will express their various opinions of the individual abilities of each and analyse the choreography and



ULANOVA IN GISELLE: Galina Ulanova as Giselle and Yuri Zhdanov as Albrecht in the first act of *Giselle*. The Bolshoi Ballet make this two-act ballet into a full evening's entertainment with the addition of about 20 minutes of the original score little-known today outside Russia.

presentation of the ballets themselves. Favourites will be established, discussion and argument will continue throughout the season and no doubt long after, but all this, however partisan or ill-founded some of it may appear, has always been part of the life-blood of ballet.

What will remain forever is the benefit that will result from the interchange of experience and ideas between the artists from the Bolshoi and those of Western companies who have been unable to communicate their theories or demonstrate their achievements for so long.

For there is much to be learned on both sides, as I discovered during the spring of this year when I visited the Soviet Union especially to gather material for a book on the Moscow Company.

To set it all down or to give all my impressions would be impossible in the short space of this article, but I can attempt perhaps to answer some of the questions most frequently put to me since my return.

Condensed productions

IS the Company visiting London the full Bolshoi Company?

NO, it would be impossible to present the full company of more than 200 dancers or to erect the colossal scenery normally used at the Bolshoi Theatre on the Covent Garden stage. The Bolshoi stage is three times as deep and in Moscow many of the productions call for scores of extras and elaborate scenic effects which it would be impossible to present on most of our Western stages.

When I was in Moscow technicians were busy preparing special sets to fit Covent Garden conditions and they told me of the many problems with which they were faced.

However, the dancers also will meet with as difficult a task in adjusting themselves to the smaller space. Accustomed to a stage which gives complete freedom of action, they will find their movements greatly restricted. For example, on most of our stages the principal ballerina in *Les Sylphides* starts the Mazurka in the wings to enable her to complete the choreography of the diagonals within view of the audience. In Moscow, on the other hand, she could take her preparation well on stage and finish as intended by Fokine without restriction. It will be particularly interesting to see how the Bolshoi producers adapt the spectacular first and fourth acts of *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai*. It will be a miracle of co-operation between the producers and the dancers if they can achieve the same spectacular performance as they do at home.

Some dancers

IS Ulanova both a great technician and interpretative artist?

ULANOVA is a true prima ballerina assoluta and a great interpretative artist who deserves all the acclaim she has received. No more need be added, for London audiences will recognise this immediately.

WOULD you say she has a successor in Plisetskaya?

MOST certainly. She in no way resembles Ulanova either physically or artistically but her performances in *The Sleeping Beauty* and *Le Lac des Cygnes* alone establish her as the obvious successor to Ulanova. She has not yet performed either Maria in *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai* or Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet*,

CLOSE-UP: Ulanova with Zhdanov in the first act of *Giselle*. Although the Bolshoi are bringing this production to London, it is not known, up to the time of going to press, on what nights the great ballerina will appear in this ballet.



but when she does I am confident that she will make them her own in spite of the Ulanova "legend." No dancer since Spessivtzeva has possessed such expressive and beautiful arms and hands. Her technique is impeccable and her interpretative range is truly incredible.

CAN you name some members of the company whose names may be little known or completely unknown to us but whom we should look forward to seeing?

OF course there is Struchkova, who has been seen already in London in concert performances. She is another strong technician and dances many of Ulanova's roles. She has achieved great success as Maria in *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai*. She will probably be seen in this part in London when Ulanova is not dancing it.

Among the men, in addition to the older dancers Yermolayev, Koren and Kondratov, there is Lapauri, whose performance in *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai* alone will justify the



ALEXANDER LAPAURI: One of the principal male dancers of the Bolshoi, as Khan Girei in *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai*.

company's visit to London. Anrianov, Evdokimov and Sekh are three dancers, equally brilliant in classical and character parts, and—if they come—each of whom should cause as much excitement as Anatole Vilzak, Vladimiroff, Woizikowsky, Lifar, Dolin or Youskevitch.

Chorokova, Chistova, Karelskaya and Gottlieb are four ballerinas who should prove great successes with London audiences and a sharp eye should be kept on the *corps de ballet* for there are many remarkable young dancers hidden in its ranks.

Moscow now the head

THERE is no question that the school and company at the Bolshoi Theatre is now the most important in Russia. Yet certainly up to the time that Diaghilev left Russia with his company it was the school and company of the Maryinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg that was of the greatest importance. Do you agree and, if so, can you give a reason for this change?



A FOUNTAIN COURT: Georgy Farmanlyants in the final scene of *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai*.

YES, because St. Petersburg was the capital in the days of Diaghilev and the ballet there received all the attention and patronage of the Imperial Court. Today the capital is Moscow and the Bolshoi Theatre thus receives the benefits. However, there are magnificent dancers in the schools and companies of both cities, and many Bolshoi dancers, including Ulanova herself, originally came from Leningrad.

CAN you give some idea of the methods used in the Moscow and Leningrad schools?

I WAS very fortunate in being able to watch classes in both cities and I have attempted to answer this in my forthcoming book, but it is difficult to reply in a few words here. But the outstanding characteristic of both schools is extreme scientific planning and caution from the first until graduation year. Teachers are free from any tendency to attempt to produce *prima ballerinas* overnight, and pupils are made to realise that even the most gifted must

submit themselves to strict discipline and gradual development. In fact discipline is the key word both in the schools and in the company. I saw all the dancers of the Bolshoi and Kirov companies both at rehearsals and in class and never once did I notice a display of "temperament."

IN a company as large as that of the Bolshoi do not many dancers of brilliance become "lost" through lack of opportunity?

I SHOULD think this is most certainly so. Leading dancers in any part of the world are reluctant to retire. In Moscow the popularity of the full-length four-act ballet, which gives important roles to only two or three dancers in a performance, makes it even more difficult for young dancers to gain full recognition.

Kirsova's book written under her married name, Hélène Bellew, is published by Thames & Hudson at 35s.

THE KHAN'S HAREM: The wives of Khan Girei dance to try and divert him. A moment from Act 2 of *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai*.



The Miraculous Mandarin

First given at the Empire Theatre, Edinburgh, by the Sadler's Wells Ballet on August 27, 1956. First given at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, on September 4, 1956.

Choreography, Alfred Rodrigues. Music, Béla Bartók. Scenario, Menyhert Lengyel. Scenery and Costumes, Wakhevitch. Lighting, William Bundy.

CAST

Mandarin	MICHAEL SOMES
Girl	ELAINE FIFIELD
Pimp	ALEXANDER GRANT
Hoodlums	RAY POWELL, PIRMIN TRECUCU
Roué	RONALD HYND
Young Man	DESMOND DOYLE

Girls, Men

A PIMP and his two hoodlums use a young prostitute to lure victims to her room, where they will be robbed. Her two first victims, an ageing roué and a penniless youth, prove disappointing catches, but a third visitor, a rich Chinese mandarin, appears to be a far more likely prospect. The girl tries to attract him, but he remains seemingly impassive until his feelings break through and he pursues the girl. He finally seizes her, but the hoodlums interrupt and rob him of his jewels and money. The hoodlums decide to kill the mandarin, and smother him with a pillow. Although left for dead he revives, and the leader of the gang stabs him with a knife. Once more he recovers, and the gang hang him from a chandelier. Smothered, stabbed and strangled he remains obstinately alive, until the girl is overcome with compassion for his suffering and embraces him. At her embrace his passion for her is assuaged, and his wounds begin to bleed freely. His life slips away peacefully in the prostitute's arms, and she is left disconsolate over the strange corpse.

CHOREOGRAPHY

IT was clearly Brutus who killed Caesar since love is so often a more effective killer than brutality, and a man unconquered by his enemies may easily die from its kiss of death. That I suppose is the theme of *The Miraculous Mandarin*, and a very good theme it is for either poetry or ballet.

HAUNT OF HOODLUMS: (Right) The Girl (Elaine Fifield) uses her wiles on the Mandarin (Michael Somes).

(Below) Trecu, Grant, Fifield and Powell, in foreground, plan who their next victim shall be.

Photos:

Houston Rogers

Lengyel's scenario, obviously attractive on paper, is extremely difficult to translate into theatrical terms. The difficulties involved tend to resolve themselves under three main headings. Firstly you have a mixture of realism and symbolism; the gang are real enough but the Mandarin is symbolic. The realistic characters have, naturally enough, got to be realistically motivated or, if you prefer it, dramatically consistent. Finally you have the considerable difficulty of presenting sadism on the stage so that it leaves neither a nasty taste in the mouth or, what is worse, a smothered laugh in the gullet. It is I think impossible

for the choreographer to get across the ballet's theme without first jumping these hurdles of the scenario.

Rodrigues really comes a cropper on the first fence, although it is difficult to see how this was avoidable. How is one to differentiate between the Mandarin, who is miraculous, and the surroundings, which are commonplace? Certainly the scenarist, in his solitary gesture of generosity towards the choreographer, has lightened the burden by making the character exotic, and Rodrigues has eagerly batted on this aspect of the character. He has given the Mandarin very simple gestures and a range of movement completely different in type from the other characters.

Perhaps a solution would have been to have made the whole ballet much more fantastic, and not to have stressed the realism of certain episodes, but it would have been difficult to equate such a treatment with the details of the existing scenario.

The motivation of the ballet's action depends to a large extent on the justification given to the prostitute's change of heart at the end. Rodrigues has made the character completely cold and dispassionate—here I think he was mistaken. It also seems dramatically wrong to have the gang witness the full scene between the girl and the Mandarin. As it appears that they could strike him down at any moment why should they wait for the formal admission of his subjugation to her wiles?

Symbolism and narrative consistency apart, Rodrigues was still faced with the problem of making acceptable the coarse brutalities of the libretto. While he sails safely round the Scylla of offensiveness he does occasionally seem to get washed up on the Charybdis of unconscious humour. Grand Guignol is farce's next of kin because horror piled on horror acts upon the defence mechanism of sanity by making us laugh. The final murderous attempt on the Mandarin with a chandelier and more than enough rope reaches a pitch of undramatic intensity worthy of a master comedian.





DIRTY WORK: Trecu, Powell, Grant offer Fifield as the bait in order to get the jewels of the Mandarin (Somes).
Photo: Houston Rogers

Looking at all these difficulties one might perhaps conclude that the most miraculous thing about this Mandarin was that anyone, from Lengyel and Bartók onwards, ever thought that his bloodsoaked story could be staged. Yet locked in this intractable scenario there remains, like Excalibur in its stone, a marvellous theme, and this was at least a brave attempt to extract it.

So far as choreography goes this seems quite easily Rodrigues's best ballet to date. The brief scene of the pursuit was powerful and gripping, and throughout the entire ballet Rodrigues seemed determined, possibly for the first time, to express everything in terms of genuinely inventive dance.

However it is what a ballet *is* that matters, not the choreography (or décor or music) by which means it achieves existence. *The Miraculous Mandarin* is like a telegraph-boy who, having a message, fails to deliver it.

DANCING

IN this kind of ballet it is difficult to judge how much margin for interpretation has been left to the dancers. Fifield, for example, seemed cold even in her culminating anguish, yet presumably this was the effect, doll-like and impersonal, that the choreographer wanted. Fifield's air of withdrawn stupidity gives credence to the street-walker.

Somes's impassive oriental mask was made impressive by the full authority of his stage presence. Both Somes and Fifield danced exceptionally well.

Grant, Trecu and Powell were equally excellent as the hoodlums, and all three managed to convey distinct characters; Grant as the *louche*, cinematic hero in the leather jerkin, Trecu as the young spiv with the "bop" haircut, and Powell as the recently graduated juvenile delinquent. Hynd and Doyle were less interestingly served by the choreography, although the latter made something (perhaps not quite enough) of his disillusionment when he finds the girl has tricked him.

The severely stylised dancing for the *corps de ballet*, with its tautened and pulsing movements, was given with tremendous drive and energy, and played a considerable part in a

performance that seemed to realise admirably the intentions of the choreographer.

Clive Barnes

MUSIC

ALTHOUGH the mistake of thinking Lengyel's nasty little story a suitable theme for a ballet was originally Bartók's, he obviously chose it for its shock potential as an ideal vehicle for shattering the nerves of complacent audiences with a veritable orgy of dissonance and frenzied rhythm.

Technically the score is an incredibly brilliant *tour de force* in which the composer would seem to have aimed at a strident intensity that would make an even more brutal impact on the senses than Stravinsky's *Sacre*, with, as in that work, aggressive rhythms ousting melody as the predominant medium for creating mood-atmosphere. The tension is immediately established and maintained to the end, but—unfortunately from a

producer's point of view—with the main climax coming roughly in the middle, in the music for the Mandarin's pursuit of the Girl.

Whether Bartók was here attempting to show the beauty that exists in ugliness, whether or not the attempt was worth while, and the extent to which he succeeded, are important questions that each individual must answer for himself.

In any case, one must admire Rodrigues' courage, in deciding that the score was a practical theatrical proposition, and the virtuosity with which he mastered its intricate rhythms. Perhaps it was just as well that on the first night the tame orchestral performance shielded the Covent Garden audience from the full force of the music's violence.

David Hunt

DECOR

EVERY cliché known to those sordid interludes in a Folies-Bergère revue has been dragged into Wakhevitch's décor—a tart's bedroom opens book-wise out of the main setting, illuminated signs flick on and off, a Metro train passes across the backcloth and old posters peel off walls undoubtedly covered with rude words. It was all highly competent but quite uninspired. Had Mistinguett or Josephine Baker appeared, matters might have been put right but, alas, one is dead and the other retired.

Bartók's brilliant score and the powerful story needed something more imaginative than this to bring it all to visual life. Admittedly some of the colour of the bedroom, in which red predominated, was effective, but one felt it should have glowed like a piece of sham jewellery in exciting tawdry colours such as Clavé can achieve.

The costumes of the *corps de ballet* were so realistic—the only concession to ballet being that the boys wore tights instead of trousers—that Fifield's stylised all-over black tights with yellow etceteras and black jet baubles looked highly incongruous. The Mandarin's costumes gave no feeling of richness and apart from his heavily be-jewelled hands and aquamarine make-up one cannot imagine a bunch of thugs giving him a double-take.

In the end one was left with the single thought that on this same stage Edward Burra once created a masterpiece of slum-designing in Helpmann's *Miracle in the Gorbals*. What a pity that William Bundy, who lit the ballet very well, had not something better to work on.

Peter Williams

UNSUCCESSFUL SUFFOCATION:

Trecu, Grant,
Fifield and
Powell try to kill
the Mandarin by
smothering him
with a pillow,
but this is of no
avail.

Photo:
Houston Rogers



London Revisited

by DAVID VAUGHAN

In his past four articles, David Vaughan, a young dancer and choreographer who has worked and studied in America, has written about his impressions of the dance scene in that country. Now returning to his native London he discusses the ballet scene as he finds it.

IN my recent articles I tried to give some impression of the American dance scene as it appeared to me during my first five years there. Of necessity this impression was a sketchy one: I dealt perhaps more summarily than I would have wished with the work of ballet choreographers, because it seemed probable that English readers would be already fairly familiar with current developments in American ballet, while the prevalent attitude towards modern dance—among our older critics at any rate—seems to be “I don’t know anything about it and I don’t want to learn.” I am afraid, too, that many who are young enough to know better went to see Martha Graham when she danced here—if they went at all—just for laughs.

Both these attitudes seem to me indefensible and to betray a quite unjustified complacency, and at the risk—or should I say in the hope—of arousing some controversy, I should like now to turn my attention to the situation here in England in this jubilee year, again from a personal viewpoint and in the light of my experiences in America.

Angus Wilson wrote recently that many people in this country are aware of “a certain stagnation in English contemporary life.” Such has certainly been my impression, and while there are certain hopeful signs in other arts that people are making some attempts—however isolated, however ignored—to alter this situation, there seems to be little effort to relieve what many dancers and dance-lovers have described to me as the “dreariness” of the dance scene in England today.

Lip-service to tradition

The trend in ballet over the last two decades seems to have been back towards State companies (whether State-subsidised or not) housed semi-permanently in opera houses; the day of the peripatetic company seems to be coming to an end. There are obvious advantages in this development: it makes ballet a somewhat less shaky proposition economically and gives the dancers the security of steady employment and relief from constant touring.

On the other hand we see only too readily what happens to the repertory of a State ballet company—it tends to become first of all a museum for the classics, while the modern repertory is correspondingly restricted in size and adventurousness. This is not intended necessarily as an adverse criticism. It is arguable that the main function of a State ballet company is to keep the classics alive and to perform modern ballets only by established choreographers. I personally am prepared to accept this view, while not being quite convinced that it justifies the *n*th revival of *Coppélia* in 10 years.

But in this country I think that—particularly where ballet is concerned—too much lip-service is paid to Tradition, especially by people who never seem to be able to define precisely what this Tradition consists of. The *traditional* ballets, as they are handed on from one generation of dancers to the next, change, some-

times imperceptibly and accidentally, sometimes through wholesale and deliberate revision by one ballet-master or another—for example, much of *Le Lac des Cygnes* as now given by the Sadler’s Wells Ballet is very different from the first complete version given by the Vic-Wells Ballet some 20 years ago. The *traditional* technique also has admitted of certain modifications over the years. People in 1956 are different from people in 1896, and they dance differently.

Yet there is a disquieting tendency to regard the versions of the classics as given at Covent Garden as in some way canonical—so that revisions made by others (for instance, Balanchine’s version of *Le Lac des Cygnes* Act II) are held to be inadmissible; while the technique of the classic ballet is apparently to be taught according to a rigid syllabus officially handed down by those organisations that make up what we might call “The Establishment.” But tradition, rightly understood, does not confer some kind of sanctity, and it does not exclude the possibility of change. Indeed, Karsavina’s definition of tradition, quoted in a recent issue of DANCE AND DANCERS, is admirably clear and simple: “I would say it is what many people have tried and found the best, and then put away what was not good.” This definition surely implies that tradition and experiment must go hand in hand; together they constitute a continuous process that keeps the art alive. Each creator in any form of art has behind him the sum total of the achievement of all the other creators there have been thus far. He must take it from there. The experimental work of today is part of tomorrow’s tradition.

It is hardly necessary to point out the relevance these observations have to the situation in British dancing today. Even the British cinema can produce, in the recent programme of Free Cinema at the National Film Theatre, an *avant-garde*; even the British theatre can produce, among its South Sea Bubbles and Separate Tables, a *Look Back in Anger*; even British commercial television has given us *A Show Called Fred*. But British ballet has no *avant-garde* at all, as far as I can see.

The spectral Workshop

Ballet Workshop, having produced several talented young choreographers, has apparently given up the ghost; while the Sadler’s Wells Choreographic Group seems to have degenerated into a platform for student works that with a few exceptions are not ready for public performance. Choreographers like Michael Charnley and Kenneth MacMillan, whose first ballets were made for these organisations, can hardly be said to be an *avant-garde*—they are already established. An *avant-garde* must continually renew itself, and this is not happening.

It is, of course, true that in England we treat choreographers most cavalierly. There seems to be an idea that two or three choreographers per generation are enough. So Antony Tudor had to go to America to produce his large-scale ballets, Walter Gore and Frank Staff have also been driven overseas by lack of recognition.

One would have thought that ballets of the calibre of *Jardin aux Lilas*, *Simple Symphony* and *Czernyana* showed enough “promise” to make it important to keep their choreographers in this country. Perhaps as we now have three or four choreographers of a new generation it is once again considered unnecessary to discover any more.

We should remember, however, that an *avant-garde* movement must itself proclaim the necessity for its existence. Part of its job is to disturb and if possible to shatter the complacency of the Establishment. What is desperately needed in British ballet at the moment is more activity—or rather, activity at the workshop level. This is essential both for the discovery of new choreographic talent and for trying out ideas that are too experimental for big companies. During the ‘thirties both of these purposes were admirably served by the Ballet Club. It is perhaps unnecessary to remind readers that the Ballet Club’s legacy was not only the magnificent repertory of the Ballet Rambert—there is hardly an important ballet company in the Western hemisphere that has not benefited directly from the experiments made on those Sunday evenings at the Mercury. These experiments have long since, in fact, been absorbed into the orthodoxy—they are a part of tradition.

Melancholy reflection

It is a melancholy business to look back over the “experimental” work I have seen in the last year in England. An evening of British Dance Theatre at Toynbee Hall was almost completely barren of ideas, whether in movement, subject-matter, or presentation. An air of fusty earnestness pervaded this whole occasion. Yet this is, I believe, the only performing organisation that can claim to represent modern dance in this country. Modern dance, in fact, seems to exist mainly in the educational sphere, where it is a kind of subdivision of P.T.—with overtones of the Women’s League of Health and Beauty.

I am not forgetting the so-called modern “jazz” dancing to be seen on television and in some stage shows in this country. While English dancers have proved by now that they are perfectly capable of performing choreography by Agnes de Mille, Michael Kidd, Jerome Robbins, Jack Cole, Bob Fosse, and the rest, it is perhaps symptomatic that our own dance directors are capable only of the most blatant and shameless plagiarism of dance numbers they have seen in American films and musical comedies. Symptomatic, that is to say, of a tendency that is to be observed in many fields of entertainment (to say the least)—our “pop” singers all have transparently phoney American accents, our commercial television is a more or less genteel imitation of American models, and the same is true of British musicals on stage and screen, heaven help them. (I make honourable exception, of course, of *The Boy Friend* and *Cranks*—but each of those is *sui generis*.) Yet we have a strong and healthy tradition of popular dancing of a most beautiful kind—I refer to British ballroom dancing which, while deriving in part, no doubt, from American originals, is now something peculiarly our own and admired and imitated throughout the world. I am amazed that no one has yet attempted to use this rich source of dance movement for theatrical purposes.

It is to be hoped, incidentally, that when the time comes for television to have the equivalent of a Third Programme, opportunity will be given to young choreographers to present serious and possibly experimental works. I am bound to say that I feel that even without a “highbrow” channel more could be done right now. That choreography of a reasonable quality can be acceptable light entertainment

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The Aims of Soviet Choreography

by A. J. COX

IT has been said by people who have had little chance of seeing the ballet of Soviet Russia other than on films or in concert performances that the choreography in present-day Soviet ballets leaves much to be desired. A. J. Cox, who knows contemporary Soviet ballet well, does not agree with this attitude. Quoting from the writings of Zakharov, choreographer of *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai*, and Lavrovsky, choreographer of *Romeo and Juliet*, he examines the choreography for the latter ballet and clarifies the aims of contemporary Soviet choreographers.



CARNIVAL IN VERONA: At the beginning of Act II, Scene I of the Bolshoi production of Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*, jesters dance in the streets as part of a carnival procession. This provides a strong contrast with the tragic deaths of Mercutio and Tybalt soon to follow.



CUSHION DANCE: At the Capulets' ball (Act I, Scene 4), the older guests perform a stately formal dance with cushions. Again making a strong contrast with what has come before, the entrance of Juliet which follows seems like the coming of Spring.

If these are the second eleven dancers, we may expect some fireworks from the Bolshoi Company in the Autumn.

THESE words concluded a lengthy comment by the ballet critic of one of our national Sunday newspapers. He was commenting on Soviet dancers and choreography as seen at the Châtelet Theatre, Paris, where the ballet company of the Stanislavsky Theatre, Moscow, has been appearing.

Knowing Soviet ballet I agree with the "fireworks" forecast. Taking as my cue the erudite opinions of the critic already quoted, and the published opinions of others on the question of Soviet ballet, I also make a forecast of "fireworks," but of a different sort. They will come from London's critical opinion which in the main always appears explosive on the subject of present-day Russian technique and choreography.

To forecast critical opinion on such a matter is to tread on dangerous ground, and having afforded myself perhaps too much of this risky luxury, I shall limit myself to the following remarks.

I think I am stating a well-known fact when I say that ballet, like all art, is an expression and reflection of social environment, a fact too often forgotten or ignored when assessing the merits or otherwise of a ballet.

Arnold Haskell reminds us that the basis of criticism rests on three simple questions: "What did the producer set out to do?" "Was it worth doing?" "Has he succeeded?" This observation applies with double force to Soviet ballet. In fact it is the key to an understanding of present-day Russian choreography.

No outside influences

No doubt there is some substance in the charge that ballet in Russia is insular and detached from world influences. But I feel that present criticism springs from the fact that so few of us are aware of the motive force behind such works as *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai*.

Rostislav Zakharov, choreographer of *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai*, and a Director of the Ballet-Masters Faculty at the State Institute of Theatrical Art, writing of Soviet choreography, has this to say:

Russian dancers and choreographers have never been interested in a form of ballet based on fantastic effects and superficial virtuosity. They have always sought to reveal the human soul in their dances. We hold that the dance can and should help man in his striving for self-perfection and a better life. It is from this point of view that we approach the dance.

Lavrovsky, the creator of *Romeo and Juliet*, is no less definite in his ideas. Speaking of mime and dramatic ballet, he says:

Ballet, particularly dramatic ballet, demands noble, deeply-felt acting, which arises from the accompanying dance and constitutes its most significant element. Ballet is a choreographic play in which the dance must appear as the sequel of mime action and mime action as the logical sequence of the dance.

One may question the validity of these two opinions, even their originality, for it is well known that both Noverre and Fokine expressed the same ideas. But it is precisely this re-exposition of these ideas that lends significance to these opinions. For an objective appraisal of the works of the Soviet ballet theatre it is essential that one bears in mind the aesthetic approach of the Russian choreographer to his task. Fortunately, one of the four works being given by the Bolshoi Company at Covent Garden this month is Lavrovsky's most famous ballet, *Romeo and Juliet*, which exemplifies his and other leading Soviet choreographers' approach to their art.

The difficulties of producing *Romeo and Juliet* are obvious. The impact of Shakespeare's tragedy lies in the spoken word. To transport it to the ballet stage, to retain and translate into balletic terms the ideas and images created by Shakespeare's poetry, can only be achieved by the dramatic impact of the music, the character of the dancing, and an essentially important factor, the *quality* of the pantomime.

Prokofiev's musical pattern deeply reflects the ebb and flow of Shakespeare's tragedy. The varying scenes of Juliet's love, the cruel braggadocio of Tybalt, Mercutio's love of life and cheerfulness, the opulence of the Capulet ball are all expressed in the music.

Lavrovsky, following the musical pattern set by Prokofiev, has attempted to bring out every facet of the tragedy. He has not confined himself to the main theme—the passion of Romeo and Juliet. Custom, environment, and the conflicting forces of the Renaissance society, find expression in the characters of Tybalt, Mercutio, and others.

He varies the style of the dancing for each episode. The *pas de deux* for Romeo and Juliet in the balcony scene interspersed with *arabesques* and sweeping lifts, has a lyrical flow to it, making the whole dance an endless stream of tender sentiments. In contrast, in the duel scene we get the violent descriptive, but limited, choreography used to interpret the character of Tybalt.

Here the dance gives way imperceptibly to an emphatic mimicry. Sharp vehement motions, and a swirling rhythm combine to produce the image of a raving destructive force. Mercutio's character is shown in the easy grace and vivacity of his dancing, completely in contrast to Tybalt.

Continuously, Lavrovsky seeks to evoke the humanist spirit of the Renaissance, embodying that spirit in the dancing of Juliet, Romeo, and Mercutio.

What Shakespeare intended

The strand linking the various elements of the ballet is the tragedy of the lovers. These elements, music, décor and choreography, complement each other, and build up the picture that Shakespeare intended us to see.

The beauty of Shakespeare's poetry is given visual expression in the dancing. The rhythm of the music, now gay, now portentous, carries clearly the message of Shakespeare's spoken word. The beauty and progress of the Renaissance are all contained in the monumental stage sets designed by the Russian artist Peter Williams.

So well do these elements blend that the strand is transformed into a strong tensile cord, never in danger of snapping, carrying not only the story of the star-crossed lovers, but the picture of one of the most fruitful periods of man's history.

Lavrovsky has confined himself to simple expression. He has sought to inject the utmost significance into the smallest detail, not by the use of "inventive" dance, but by elaborating on the stage those aesthetic ideas from which I quoted earlier. With crystal-clear simplicity he has found plastic expression that is vivid, true-to-life, and natural.

Present events, the appearance here in Britain of various forms of Soviet culture, indicate that the Russians are prepared to abandon their insularity and mix more freely with us.

The critic has a positive part to play in this development. His active participation can encourage an exchange of ideas that will lead to a further flowering of the art of ballet both for us and the Russians. But we must discard the type of criticism that begins and ends with "the broken wrist" and "the bent knee in *arabesque*." It must take the form of an objective and critical analysis of what Russia has to offer. This must be the role of the critics, and we can do it without surrendering any of our legitimate functions.



GEORGY FARNYANTS as the leading Jester in a solo.



IN JULIET'S ROOM: Galina Ulanova as Juliet with Yuri Zhdanov in Act III, Scene I.
(Below) Paris and the Capulets discover the supposedly dead Juliet in Act III, Scene 3.



New Ballets in Boboli

Creations and revivals by Aurel Milloss for the 1956 Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, held this year in the open air in the famous Boboli Gardens, Florence.

Reviewed by GIANNI CARANDENTE

THE first Maggio Musicale Fiorentino took place in 1933. Originally instituted to take place every two years, the festival soon became a yearly institution. From the second one in 1935 it gave an important place to ballet. The first ballet show was then entrusted to the Paris Opéra Ballet. Today the Maggio has reached its nineteenth edition, and during these 23 years many of the greatest ballet companies have appeared at Florence.

In 1936 there was Colonel de Basil's Ballet; in 1938 the Ballet of the Budapest Royal Opera House; in 1939 the Monte Carlo Ballet; in 1947, after the wartime interruption and the re-opening at last of the Italian frontiers, there came Sadler's Wells, who had one of their most memorable successes in this their first contact with Italian audiences. Subsequently, there has been the New York City Ballet, the American National Ballet Theatre, Martha Graham's Company, the Belgrade Theatre Ballet and the Ballet of the Opéra-Comique of Paris. Many celebrated dancers have appeared on the stage of the City Theatre of Florence, including Margot Fonteyn, Galina Ulanova and Moira Shearer, as well as many "free" dancers like the Sakharoffs and Kreutzberg.

But the greatest merit of the Maggio is that it has contributed to the rise of ballet in Italy with creations of its own. Aurel Milloss has been the main instigator of this revival, as he had been for La Scala, Milan, and for the Rome Opera.

This year also Milloss has been entrusted with creating the ballets for the Maggio, and he took even greater pains over his productions than in the past, perhaps because the vast Boboli Gardens next to the Pitti Palace were opening their gates to ballet for the first time in their history. In the past there had been memorable performances of opera-ballets: in 1938, Gluck's *Alceste*, produced by Herbert Graf and with choreography by Boris Romanoff; the following year Torquato Tasso's poem *Aminta*, with choreography by Aurel Milloss, and more recently, in 1953, a production of Rameau's *Les Indes Galantes* on a scale even more lavish than the celebrated one given on the stage of the Paris Opéra.



THE GARDENS TRANSFORMED: The design by the young Italian painter, Franco Laurenti, for *Le Creature di Prometeo*. The use of different levels and of distant perspective, which can only be achieved in the open-air, helped to create a number of startling stage effects. Photo: Marchiori

Such a "back-drop" as the Boboli Gardens is certainly unique in the world—a superb and unspoiled example of a formal Italian Renaissance garden, with a perfect balance struck between the natural beauty of foliage and flowers and the ordered symmetry of the man-made decoration. It is a well-known fact that such great artists of the Cinquecento as Ammannati, Buontalenti and Alfonso Parigi were its creators.

In this environment, choreography on the grand scale becomes absolutely essential, and the three ballets by Milloss were intelligently planned to serve this end.

Le Creature di Prometeo

Heroic-allegorical ballet by Salvatore Viganò. Music by Ludwig van Beethoven. Free elaboration of Viganò's scenario and choreography by Aurel Milloss. Costumes designed by Franco Laurenti. Orchestra of the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino conducted by Bruno Bartoletti.

BACCHUS: Laurenti's design for Ray Pointer.

URANIA: A design for one of the Nine Muses.

CALLIOPE: Another of Laurenti's designs for a Muse. Photos: Marchiori





FINALE: The closing moment of *Le Creature di Prometeo* which makes full use of the setting, the design for which is on the opposite page. In the foreground is Prometheus (Boris Trailine) and the Creatures (Sabine LeBlanc and Victor Ferrari). In the distance, as though suspended in the air, is Apollo (Esteban Cerda). Photo: Marchiori

Cast

The Creatures ..	SABINE LEBLANC, VICTOR FERRARI
Prometheus ..	BORIS TRAILINE
Apollo ..	ESTEBAN CERDA
Pan ..	DERYK MENDEL
Bacchus ..	RAY POINTER
Eros ..	ANGELO PIETRI
Psyche ..	ANTONIETTA NICOLI
The Nine Muses ..	Brenda Hamlin, Anna Brillarelli, Antonietta Daviso, Sandra Mangani, Michou Nadal, Bianca Resi, Christine Brabant, Nora Irinova, Stephanie Cvernova.

Corps de Ballet.

THIS heroic-allegorical ballet was composed by Salvatore Viganò for the Empress Maria Theresia at the Hofoper of Vienna in 1801, and with music by Ludwig van Beethoven, which closely follows the choreographer's text. The scenario of *Prometheus* is now lost, but the score remains with its descriptive directions, not all of them explicit but giving a fair idea of

the action. *Gli uomini di Prometeo* (*Men of Prometheus*) or *La forza della musica e della danza* (*The Force of Music and Dance*) was a first edition of the theme which Viganò developed 12 years later in the "coreodrama" *Prometeo*, first given at La Scala in 1813.

The ballet originally consisted of two acts and a finale, and some of the musical themes are found in later works of the great genius of Bonn. The first act takes place on Earth and tells of Prometheus fashioning his creatures in clay, but the score unfortunately bears no other indication than that of the opening storm. The second act takes place on Parnassus in the presence of Apollo and the Muses. It consists of many formal pieces and ends with a *March*, a *Pastoral*, a *Coro di Gioia*, a *Solo di Gioia* (*gioia* means "joy," but it could also be a reference to the dancer Gaetano Gioia), a *Terzetto di grotteschi* (*Trio of Grotesques*), a *Coro di Viganò*, where the word *coro* (chorus) could be interpreted also in its alternative Greek meaning and, therefore, refer to a "dance" of

Viganò himself, and a *Finale*. The allegory of the Prometheus story was interpreted in terms of the arts by which man is ennobled. The first act was a choreo-drama, the second more a formal divertimento.

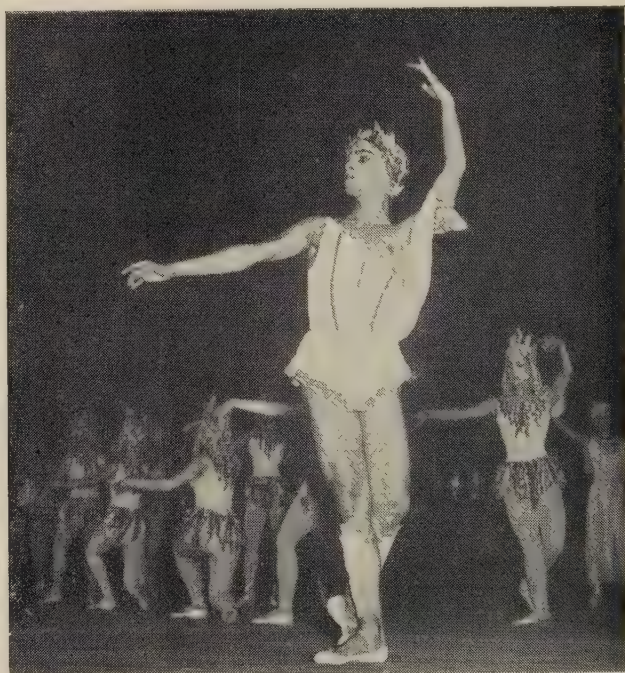
Milloss's version, the second modern revival after Lifar's 1929 Paris production, dates back to 1933, when it was performed at the Augsburg Tanzbühne. It is a *ballet concertante* in which Milloss faithfully followed Viganò's theories, eliminating stylised gestures so that the dramatic action is carried forward in a blend of mime and pure dance.

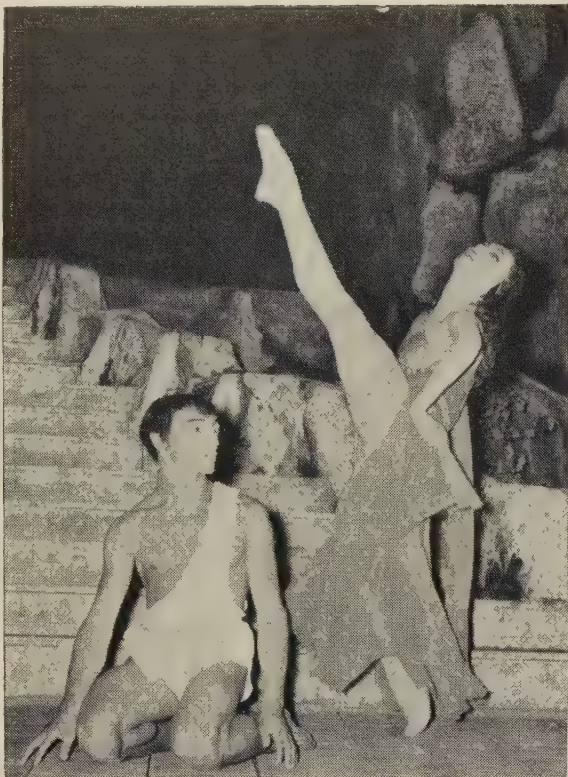
After having been given several times in Italy and abroad, the ballet has now been revised for its open-air presentation in the Boboli Gardens. Milloss has not made the mistake of limiting himself to broad spectacular effects. He has certainly taken advantage of the opportunities afforded for sumptuous display by the three-tiered stages and the elaborate lighting equipment. But he has been essentially concerned with a delicately poetic

ALFRESCO REHEARSAL: Victor Ferrari and Sabine LeBlanc, as the Creatures, rehearse with Boris Trailine, as Prometheus, in the Boboli Gardens. Photo: Lido



APOLLO BESTOWS A GIFT: Esteban Cerda as the god who glorifies man with his gift of the liberal arts. Photo: Locchi





SEDUCTION SCENE:

Joseph (René Bon)
resists the advances
of Potiphar's
Wife (Hélène
Trailine) in the
Milloss version of
Richard Strauss's
The Legend of
Joseph, given at the
festival in Florence.

This is the most
recent version of the
Kessler-von Hof-
mannstahl ballet
based on the Biblical
story, first given by
the Diaghilev ballet
in 1914 when
Leonide Massine
made his début.

Photo (right): Lido

Photo (left): Locchi



interpretation of the allegory, from the first archaic stirrings of the "creatures" to the moment when man is raised up and glorified by Apollo's gift of the liberal arts.

All the soloists gave accurate renderings of their parts and it was to the choreographer's credit that the dancers, all products of different schools and systems of training, made a homogeneous group. Sabine Leblanc was a sculpturesque Creature, with Victor Ferrari as her well-matched partner. Boris Trailine, if insufficiently expressive, was a good Prometheus, Esteban Cerda a supple and elegant Apollo. The former Rambert dancer Brenda Hamlin was outstanding among the nine Muses as a graceful Melpomene. *Le Creature di Prometeo* must be counted as an inspired and triumphantly successful essay in the neo-classical style.

Le Quattro Stagioni

(The Four Seasons)

Choreographic divertissement from the opera *I Vespri Siciliani* by Giuseppe Verdi. Choreography by Aurel Milloss. Costumes by Franco Laurenti.

Cast

ANTONIETTA NICOLI, BORIS TRAILINE,
BRENDA HAMLIN, VICTOR FERRARI
and Corps de Ballet.

THE first choreography of this opera-ballet was by Lucien Petipa (brother of Marius) and had Claudina Cucchi as prima ballerina. A version was staged by Milloss in 1940 at the Rome Opera, later repeated in 1951 at the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino and at La Scala; and again in 1953 at the Rio de Janeiro Municipal Theatre with the Sao Paulo Ballet Company. The present version has been adapted to the requirements of the open-air. A young Italian ballerina, Antonietta Nicoli, a

pupil of Teresa Battaggi, director of the ballet school of the Rome Opera, has essayed for the first time a challenging role. This young dancer has definite promise, especially if she will correct some technical faults. She attracted Leonide Massine's attention during his Roman sojourn. As Flora in *The Seasons* she danced with eager assurance, although she did not always appear to be up to the role.

La Légende de Joseph

Scenario by Count Harry Kessler and Hugo von Hofmannstahl. Music by Richard Strauss. Choreography by Aurel Milloss. Orchestra of the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino conducted by Bruno Bartoletti.

Cast

Joseph .. RÉNÉ BON
Potiphar's Wife .. HÉLÈNE TRAILINE
Corps de Ballet

INTENDED originally as a vehicle for Nijinsky, this Biblical ballet is certainly one of the greatest baroque display pieces of the Diaghilev era. From its world première in Paris in 1914, with choreography by Fokine, to this new version by Milloss, it has mainly had an extraordinary success, accounted for more by its spectacular qualities than by its dance content.

Milloss has skilfully exploited the natural resources of the stage surroundings in the Boboli Gardens. The scene of the fighters, entrusted to a large group of dancers and arranged with an inventive and daring interplay of movement, gave an effect of great beauty. But there was no lack of poetic interpretation in the solo roles. The part of Joseph was sensitively realised by the choreographer, both in the style of the dance and in expressing the subtly complex character of the chaste Joseph.

René Bon's interpretation was excellent, technically as well as expressively. Hélène Trailine was Potiphar's wife, sensuous, despotic and headstrong, in accordance with the story.

All the other soloists were equally effective. But the true protagonist of the drama, a co-ordinator of masses and of complicated movements, was the choreographer Milloss.

COVER STORIES

This month's front cover is of Galina Ulanova, the prima ballerina assoluta of the Bolshoi Ballet in Moscow, in the role of Juliet from Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*, which is to be given on the opening night of the Bolshoi Ballet's first London season at Covent Garden.

GALINA ULANOVA was born in 1910 in Leningrad. Both her father and mother were dancers at the famous Maryinsky—now the Kirov—Theatre there. At the age of six, Ulanova first saw her mother dance in *Casse Noisette*. In 1919 she was placed in the State School of Choreography, from which she

graduated in 1928, dancing the leading Sylphide in Fokine's *Chopiniana*.

From then on she took over roles of increasing importance and her first Odette-Odile in *Swan Lake* took place at the Kirov Theatre in 1929. In the same year she danced Princess Aurora in *The Sleeping Beauty*. After alternating between dancing principal roles in Leningrad and Moscow, she became a permanent ballerina of the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow during the last war. Outside the classics, possibly her most famous role is Juliet, which she created in Leningrad in the Lavrovsky production in 1940, in Moscow in 1946.

Today Galina Ulanova is generally considered to be the foremost ballerina in the world.

England and France in Santander

SPAIN is a great country made up of violent contrasts and contradictions, and when you are there everything falls into a definite pattern—a vast mosaic of incredible richness and dire poverty, of scorching sun and cool shadow. Against this backcloth is played out the stupendous symbolical drama of man versus his eternal enemy—the bullfight is possibly the greatest art of all time. But the Spanish people are turning to another art, less violent, but to them scarcely less exciting. In my tour extending from Santander, in the extreme north, to nearly the furthest point south, Cadiz, I witnessed the heartening spectacle of a country awakening to, and appraising with rare understanding, the art of ballet.

PETER WILLIAMS

The Paris Opéra

FIVE years ago the experiment was tried of holding a festival in Granada and the popularity of this now annual event has spurred other Spanish towns to follow suit. This year there were 23 festivals of music, drama and ballet held across the Iberian peninsula, attended nightly by thousands, with Santander running Granada fairly close as Spain's most important summer centre of culture. Much of this is due to the unceasing work of José Manuel Riancho, technical director of Spanish festivals and a live wire if ever there was one. Live wire he is in a literal sense in that he is seldom off the telephone, keeping in touch with his office in Madrid and with the other Spanish festivals—it is impossible for him to stop in a car at some remote hamlet without immediately rushing to a telephone and every meal he eats is punctuated by incoming calls. Such a person is rare in Spain where *mañana*—that national disease of putting off everything until "tomorrow"—contaminates almost every citizen.

The northern part of Spain, bordering on the Bay of Biscay, comes as a surprise to the uninitiated because it enjoys about the same climate as Cornwall, is as mountainous as Austria and as green as Ireland. The festival in Santander is held in a huge courtyard which can seat 5,000 people, and is covered over with gargantuan strips of canvas in case it rains.

The month-long festival there opened with

PAINTING ON THE WALL: Designs by the painter and theatre designer Ramon Calderón for the wall of the courtyard where the festival was held in Santander.

Photo: Mazo

(Below) Part of the audience of 5,000 watching a performance of the Paris Opéra in the transformed courtyard in Santander. Some of Calderón's decorations, shown in detail in the pictures on the right, can be seen on the walls in the background.

Photo: Gyenes

the company of Antonio, which I missed. This was followed by the stars and *corps de ballet* of the Paris Opéra, three performances of which I managed to see.

Delibes lacks conviction

Although every attempt is made to reproduce in the open air the environment and atmosphere of the theatre, there is no doubt that certain works are bound to suffer away from the proscenium arch and all the facilities that only the theatre can offer. Against a backcloth and wings of green bay leaves with the occasional addition of some architectural scenery, it was the ballets with a narrative which seemed to suffer most and the Opéra *Coppélia*

did not come off too well—but that may have been due more to the actual production than to the alien surroundings.

Christiane Vaussard is an exceptionally strong and fine dancer and she turns brilliantly, but these are not essential qualities for Swanilda, who needs charm above all else. There was never the feeling that she was living the role but rather that it was merely an excuse for appearing on the stage. The mime throughout was stilted and rather meaningless. Nor was she helped by the cardboard Frantz of Duflot who left no impression at all, though it must be remembered that at the Opéra this role is usually played *en travestie* and contains no dancing. This two-act version of the Saint-Léon—Delibes classic is insipid and nobody seems to dance it with any conviction.

On the other hand the *Lifar-Lalo Suite en Blanc* is ideal for such surroundings and the lack of colour (it is all in black and white) made it look very pretty. Although the company seemed rather cramped and one member of the *corps* fell off a rostrum, letting out a very audible French scream, the performance of this work was mainly very good. This ballet shows Lifar's choreography at its best and it has a grandeur that befits Lalo's elaborate and lush score. Madeleine Lafon and Michel Renault were as accomplished as always in their variations and the recent *étoile*, Claude Bessy, outstanding in the Flute Dance.

Russians, today and yesterday

Another equally successful work was Balanchine's *Palais de Cristal* (Bizet's Symphony in C) with Lafon, Vaussard and Bessy particularly good in the first three movements, though Micheline Grimoine was hardly suited to the final movement.

Divertissement, a Russian salad by Lifar of the best bits from Petipa's *The Sleeping Beauty*, was a very limp salad indeed and was an inappropriate choice. Only Peter Van Dijk seemed to have any style at all. The rest made a sorry showing which completely lacked the





SUITE EN BLANC: Christiane Vaussard, centre, in a pirouette during a moment in Lifar's ballet to Lalo music.
Photo: Gyenes



ROMEO AND JULIET: Michel Renault and Liane Daydé in Lifar's version of Tchaikovsky's symphonic poem. Peter Van Dijk later danced Romeo.



CASSE NOISETTE: Peter Van Dijk and Liane Daydé in the grand pas de deux.

PALAIS DE CRISTAL: Three étoiles—Lafon, Vaussard and Bessy—with Max Bozzoni, at the back, and Michel Renault kneeling.



grand manner. Although they danced well, nobody seemed to have shown them how to dance these Russian classics: they never achieved any real beauty of line—arms were careless and feet turned towards the sky instead of pointing to the earth. In this respect Renault was a noticeable offender in the *Blue Bird pas de deux*. Admittedly the orchestration was none too happy but that is no excuse.

Shakespeare in ballet

Lifar's *pas de deux* on the *Romeo and Juliet* story, using Tchaikovsky's symphonic poem, was on the other hand completely rewarding with a tender performance by Liane Daydé as Juliet and a most poetic Romeo in Van Dijk. Both roles ideally suited these artists and, in the programmes I saw, this work was the most appreciated by the Spanish audience, who anyway have a deep regard for strong stories of love and death. I have seen this *pas de deux* given by many artists but never so sensitively as on this occasion, and it amounted to as exquisitely danced an expression of young love as we are likely to see. The same dancers were not so successful in the *Casse Noisette pas de deux* for the same reasons which marred the other Tchaikovsky-Petipa *Divertissement*.

Also in three programmes was another *pas de deux*—*Pasos y Lineas*—with choreography by Lifar to Debussy music. This showed the beautiful line of Claude Bessy and the fine partnering of Max Bozzoni; otherwise the work seemed unmusical and hardly distinguished. Equally unsatisfactory was a performance of Lifar's *Variations and Grand Pas*, to Schubert music, originally intended for the Opéra étoilés. Like Ashton's *Homage to the Queen*, when removed from the purpose and occasion for which it was created, there seemed little point to the work and I particularly missed Chauviré and Vyroubova.

As always, when seeing the company of the Paris Opéra, I become aware of what a fine body of dancers they are; but so much of what they do is careless and undisciplined.

Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet

AFTER a visit to the south of Spain to see, among other attractions, our own Ballet Rambert, I returned north to Santander to take in one performance of the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet. Seeing them in the same surroundings as the Opéra group it was possible to compare these two schools from opposite sides of the English Channel.

The first thing that struck me about the British dancers was their discipline. They lacked the excitement of the French dancers but hardly a finger seemed out of place and this was particularly noticeable in Ashton's *Les Rendezvous*. If ever there was an ideal ballet for showing to a new audience under near-alfresco conditions then this is it. It has wit—not too subtle—gay Auber music and every moment is danced. It is also very compact in construction. All of this was very much appreciated by the Spanish audience. Sara Neil gave a very good account of herself in the Markova role and, if lacking the wit of the great ballerina, she nevertheless gave it with charm and precise technique, as also did Donald Britton in the part originally created by Idzikowski. Without the usual setting, designed by William Chappel, the ballet was considerably enhanced.

A new Giselle

It is not really possible to write about the new production of *Giselle* which followed, as owing to a foot accident, Anne Heaton was unable to dance and Nadia Nerina and Alexis



WEDDING IN THE MONASTERY: Donald Britton and Sara Neil of the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet in the Monastery of Santa Juliana at Santillana del Mar. This monastery, dating from the sixth century, is in one of the most perfectly preserved old villages in Spain and which was once the home of some of Spain's noblest families. The village is about 30 kilometres from Santander. Photo: Lido



BIRDS ON BISCAY: Michael Boulton and Patricia Cox as the Lovers, surrounded by the Enchanted Girls as Birds from Kenneth MacMillan's House of Birds, which had a great success at the Santander Festival. Particular interest was caused by the fact that the music was written by the Spanish composer, Mompou. This group is posed in the gardens of the Palacio de la Magdalena, the old summer residence of the King. Photo: Lido



WINETASTER BALLERINA: Guest artists with Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet—Nadia Nerina and Alexis Rassiné—in a typical old Spanish tavern in Santander. Nerina is trying to drink red wine from one of the carafs which are used for communal drinking in Spain. Note the ends of the barrels stacked up to the high ceiling, which have all been painted by different artists. Photo: Lido



SWANILDA AND THE MATADOR: Doreen Tempest and Miro Zolan, in their Coppélia costumes, with the famous matador Antonio Chenel Antoñete, outside the bullring in Santander. The whole of the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet were invited to the corrida on the Sunday afternoon during the time of their visit to the festival. Their reactions to this fiesta were mixed—some of the girls had to leave as it upset them so much. Photo: Lido

Rassiné were substituted. Nor without the new settings by Peter Rice was it easy to judge just how this production would eventually look. Some costumes were good and others looked rather out of place; but on the other hand they might be excellent against the setting for which they were intended. The production follows the Covent Garden one closely, except that Giselle's village has reverted to its Amazon state—there are no *corps de ballet* boys.

Nerina's Giselle was well danced though it was scarcely moving. She is such a strong dancer and appears able to execute almost any step with brilliance, but she never really makes contact with her audience—rather like a dancer seen through the wrong end of a telescope. Alexis Rassiné as Albrecht was less good than usual and rather off form. The best performances came from Margaret Hill as a rather

over-hatted but thoroughly convincing Bathilde, a performance equalled by her Queen of the Wilis in the second act, and Henry Legerton as an Hilarion for whom, for once, one can imagine Giselle having had some regard. In the interpolated *pas de deux*, Patricia Cox was effective in a small way and Michael Boulton in a big way. The latter has developed into a strong and virile dancer.

They know what they like

In the four performances of these two companies which I saw in Santander I was very impressed by the intelligence of the audience. They were not impressed by the flashier aspects of the French dancers and they would have appreciated greater star quality in the English dancers. If they did not like anything the

volume of applause made this clear. At each performance their judgment was perfectly right and far more discriminating than that of the average British audience.

The Orquesta de Camera de Madrid accompanied both companies (conducted for the Opéra by Daniel Störn, for the Wells by John Lanchbery) and although I heard a number of notes which were quite new to me and although there were occasional passages of no music at all, it was as good as one can expect outside Germany or Austria from an orchestra which has to play a large number of works new to them with the minimum of rehearsal.

In its three years of existence, the festival of Santander has grown rapidly in importance. The fact that around 5,000 people attend the various spectacles almost nightly for the span of a month is proof of the need for, and the great interest in, the lively arts in Spain.

IBERIAN MOSAIC: 2

Flamenco in Madrid

Halfway between the festivals in the north and south of Spain, I stopped off in Madrid with the main purpose of seeing the paintings of Valasquez, El Greco and Goya. It was a pleasant surprise to find that it was also possible to see and hear some of the best Flamenco dancing and singing in Spain.

PETER WILLIAMS



SPANISH CAFE CONCERT: The prints reproduced on this page show the typical *Café Cantante* of the last century.

Left: The print upon which the present-day Zambra was modelled. The audience sit around at tables drinking, smoking and forming an essential part of the performance.

Below (left): A dancer performing a dance of the baile jondo group

Below (right): A Flamenco singer and guitarist.

"NOW, where to see the real Flamenco—that is the question?" The Spanish frontier has hardly been crossed before the traveller, thirsting for what he believes to be the real Spain, asks this question. He asks it with his head buzzing with visions of caves, stale with time, where gypsies shout, stamp and clap incessantly; where dusky beauties twist and turn in sinuous and seductive movements, with jet black hair falling over faces whose natural features are distorted in passionate grimace. He may, of course, see all this and return to his home happy in the belief that he penetrated deep into the true heart of Andalusia, poor misguided one!

No, the casual traveller in Spain has little chance of seeing the real, pure Flamenco because it mainly takes place at private parties where the dancers and singers, primed with bottles of Manzanilla, give of their Spanish soul. Or, if you are lucky, at about five in the morning in some tavern in Seville, Cadiz, or Malaga, the demon (*duende*) will enter a gypsy and then the dancing or singing will be something that you may not witness again on this earth. But it all takes many hours of waiting. In some of the booths during the *feria* in Seville it might also be possible to see the great ones of Flamenco art, but the chances are pretty remote.

So if after many hot hours of traipsing around caves where the gypsies "put on a show" for tourists, you are still not wholly satisfied that you have seen what you are seeking, then the answer is to go to, of all places because it is in the heart of Castille, Madrid.

The word "Zambra" is a legacy of Moorish occupation which originally meant revelry by night or a party at which people danced and told stories. Today it implies a group of gypsies who dance and sing, and nearly all Flamenco songs tell a story of some kind. Zambra is also the name of a Madrid club which lies at the back of the Prado in the Ruiz de Alarcon. It has been organised by Señor Cesares and the Spanish Tourist Club; but don't be put off by the word "Tourist" because in Spain it has the best meaning, whereas in most countries it implies commercialised folksiness.

In a highly successful attempt at preserving the pure Flamenco of Andalusia this club has rendered a very great service to the world. The club is a reconstruction of the old *Café Cantante* of the last century, which you can see in the print reproduced at the head of this article. Situated in a cellar well below street

level it is spotlessly clean and from about eleven-thirty each evening until three in the morning, groups of singers and dancers from Andalusia, seated in a semicircle on a small raised stage at the end of a long narrow room, perform for your and their pleasure. It may not be as dirty and romantic as the cave of your dreams, but it is far more comfortable, and in spite of your pre-conceived ideas—it is the real thing.

Excitement without disorder

No hair falls about in wild disorder, and flowers do not drop untidily upon the stage; it is very ordered and no wit less exciting on account of that. Almost primly the dancers and singers sit around. All of a sudden a dancer will be galvanised into action in a *baile jondo* (Deep dance), a *Caña*, *Polo*, *Siguriya*, *Soleares*, or one of the many dances brought to Andalusia from the East by gypsies of ancient time. These dances may sometimes be accompanied by *cantaoras* (singers), sometimes by one or both of the guitarists who form the centre of the semicircle. The remainder of the group will provide a background accompaniment by clapping rhythmically (*palmas*) or shouting some word of encouragement at suitable moments. Interspersed between the dances are songs by one of the several fine singers who

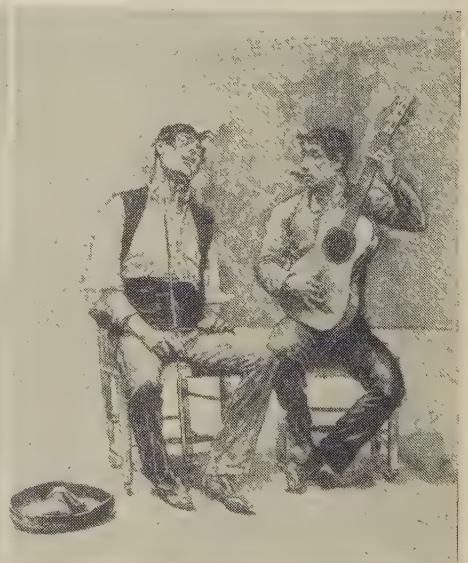
regularly appear at Zambra. These are the finest Flamenco singers I have ever heard, and are very highly thought of in Spain. Although the words are seldom intelligible to the average foreign visitor, any more than are they understood by the average Spaniard, the nuances and gestures make the implication perfectly clear.

Hand-picked from Andalusia

The artists are all hand picked from various parts of Andalusia and each, in his or her respective way, is a master of pure style. Outstanding possibly is Rosita Duran, who is tall, slim and beautiful with the complexion of a hybrid magnolia. She has a very supple body and beautiful arms, and were she a classical ballet dancer one would say she was well-placed. She has a spot to herself in the evening's programme, and for the best part of 25 minutes she dances some splendid examples of *baile jondo*. On the evenings I was at Zambra she was at her best in *La Peternera* and a magnificent *Cadiz Caracoles*.

The entire performance has an impromptu air of spontaneity which is just what these old *Café Concerts* were, and I gather that it is possible to go on very many occasions without seeing the same dances or hearing the same songs twice. In the summer months the club is mainly patronised by foreigners as most of the inhabitants of Madrid leave for the cool north from July to September. In the winter it is the aristocracy who flock into the cellar in Ruiz de Alarcon.

Several times I was asked if I thought Zambra was exportable, and the answer is most certainly yes, but with one very important reservation—the atmosphere must be retained. It would be no use putting this on in the ordinary London theatre as the whole thing must be kept intimate, with the audience sitting at tables, drinking and smoking at ease and forming an integral part of the whole show. The establishment in London with the greatest affinity to Zambra is the Players Theatre Club, which, in many ways, could be called its English counterpart.





LA PETERNERA: Rosita Duran in one of the oldest dances in the baile jondo group.
Photo: Gyenes



SOLEARES: Mariano Heredia and Mari Carmen Acereo dance together.
Photo: Gyenes



MARI-CELA in one of the solos which punctuate the programme.
Photo: Gyenes



SIGUIRIYAS: Rosita Duran and Mariano Heredia accompanied by singers and guitarists with the rest of the group clapping out the rhythm with palmas.
Photo: Gyenes



CUADRO FLAMENCO DE ZAMBRA: Masuja Baena, centre, surrounded by the group.
Compare this picture with the print at the top of the opposite page.
Photo: Fot-O-Lab



LA CANA: Rosita Duran with the singer Pericon de Cadiz and guitarist Perico del Lunan. Photo: Fot-O-Lab

Across Andalusia with Rambert

Leaving the festival in the cool north and the bustle of Madrid, my journey continues southwards where the sun gets hotter and brighter every hour. Here Ballet Rambert are appearing at festivals in Jaen and Cadiz; here also is Spain as the foreigner imagines it.

PETER WILLIAMS

Jaen's first festival

SEVERAL hours south of Madrid, the streamlined air-conditioned aluminium express to Seville stopped voluntarily at a small station; it had previously stopped involuntarily for two hours owing to a breakdown. Then followed a motor drive of about 30 kilometres to Jaen. In the vivid sunset, the landscape took on a remarkable quality—vast stretches of mountainous earth in massive washes of luminous Venetian red and ochre, against which the local inhabitants seemed to be deeply etched in solid black Indian ink. A quite unforgettable 40 minutes.

To be then almost immediately precipitated into a performance of Ballet Rambert's *Les Sylphides* made Fokine's *ballet blanc* take on the most extraordinary exotic quality. Against a background of this kind *Scheherazade* or *Prince Igor* would no doubt seem tame, but the white Romantic ballet suddenly becomes the essence of exoticism. And very well danced it was by a sensitive *corps de ballet* and by Noreen Sopwith, splendidly partnered by Norman Dixon.

This was Jaen's first festival and the first time that this delightful Andalusian town has ever seen ballet. The fact that such a remote place should have a festival at all must be entirely due to the mayor of the city—a remarkable and far-seeing person who has great plans for his city's future, including productions of Shakespeare and possibly Greek tragedy. These are planned to be given on the ramparts of the old castle which, situated on a mountain, dominates a countryside where Scipio once conquered the Carthaginian armies.

After wandering through narrow paved streets one comes upon the long tree-flanked park with a well-constructed stage at one end. As in Santander, the scenery consists of "wings" and "backcloth" of greenery, but in this case it merged into the surrounding foliage. In the warm night, with the stars as

a ceiling and to the general accompaniment of cicadas, the other ballets—*Peter and the Wolf*, *Pas Classique* and *Coppélia* also took on a new magic.

Nadia Benois has designed new costumes for Frank Staff's *Peter and the Wolf* and they seem to have a far more authentic Russian folktale flavour than the previous ones. As Peter, Patricia Dyer gives a performance of boisterous charm and is the role's best interpreter since Lulu Dukes. In fact, the whole company, particularly Patricia Ashworth as the Bird and Selma Siegertsz as the Duck, dance Prokofiev's sophisticated cautionary tale with rare understanding. That the Spanish audience took them to their hearts is not so obvious a conclusion as you might imagine, as they do not as a rule care for humorous ballets.

In Gsovsky's *Pas Classique* to Auber music Hélène Trailine danced with strong bravura technique and great stage presence. She was partnered by her brother, Boris, who was really a little too short for her. In his variation his *tours en l'air* were some of the best I have seen from any male dancer.

Both appeared later as Swanilda and Frantz in *Coppélia* Act III. Although dancing well, they did not quite seem to belong in the production. Not having seen this new production in the theatre, it is impossible for me to say what Doboujinski's designs are really like. Some of the girls' costumes were pretty but the boys looked out of place; some of them were in green of a particularly poisonous shade which may have seemed worse against the greens which only nature can provide.

The reception the company received made it pretty clear that though this was the first time Jaen had seen ballet it was most certainly not going to be the last. It made me reflect, as I have often had occasion to do over the past months, what a splendid cultural ambassador ballet has become. I am sorry that a tight schedule made it impossible to stay longer

with these friendly people in their historic town in which the clean, sandy-coloured houses seem to have grown from the earth. Olives bring them the prosperity to continue their cultural activities, and this, together with their genuine enthusiasm, should give Jaen greater importance in the future.

On to Seville

The further generosity of the mayor in putting the official car at our disposal made the difficult journey of 283 kilometres to Seville as agreeable as possible. Through mile upon mile of olive groves and cotton plantations occasionally punctuated by ruins, relics of Roman and Moorish occupation; through Cordoba with its famous mosque—a great forest of marble columns; through more wild and exciting country where the sun seems to have baked earth, buildings and people to the same colour. On to Seville, lying low on the banks of the Guadalquivir.

In the dusk, the gardens of the Alcazar, kept open for our special benefit, seem to give off all the perfumes of Arabia. Cool fountains playing in grottos and in secret avenues bring relief after the burning Andalusian day. What a setting for the most wonderful love story in the world; in fact these gardens will form the background for the Seville Festival at the end of September. The great 12th-century cathedral is overpowering in size. In the narrow streets of the quarter of Santa Cruz, with its mysterious whitewashed houses, each doorway opening on to a palm-filled courtyard, it is possible to imagine every episode of *Figaro* or *The Barber*. Here is a city of infinite beauty which, like the rest of Spain, seems to change character completely when one simply crosses a street.

The gardens of Cadiz

On across flat orange-growing and bull-rearing country to Cadiz, founded by the Phoenicians in 1100 B.C. Here the festival takes place in a constructed and permanent open-air theatre in the Genoves Park. At night, one approaches the theatre down a long avenue of palm trees, sub-tropical shrubs and fountains, so beautifully floodlit that it is as though one has entered a garden of myriads of precious stones. At first it seems that the modern concrete proscenium with its red velvet curtain does not fit too happily into this environment. An oriental pavilion would seem to be more suitable, but as the opening ballet—Gore's *Winter Night*—continues on its rather tortured course, everything falls into place.

Gore's ballet to Rachmaninov's Second Piano Concerto wears well, seeming to change its aspect according to who is playing the principal roles. In this case it is Ann Horn and Noreen Sopwith with Norman Dixon replacing David Poole, who is suffering from that complaint common among people visiting Spain for the first time—colitis. Ann Horn gives a powerful performance as the girl on the way out of the man's love life. She is as good, if not better than Margaret Hill and Mary Munro, her predecessors in this role (I never saw Sally Gilmour). Good dancer as Sopwith is, she never quite suggests innocent young love. Dixon, a dancer who improves all the time, has not yet developed enough personality to make this the pivot role of the ballet; though this may have been partly due to the fact that he went on with little rehearsal.

The Trailines appeared as Odette and Prince Siegfried in *Swan Lake* Act II. On this occasion Hélène fitted in with the production far better than she did in *Coppélia* in Jaen. She is a strong technical dancer, ideal for neo-classic ballets such as those of Lifar or Balanchine. At the moment she lacks the quality of pure classicism which makes a dancer a part of a whole classical ballet rather than

NEW EXOTICISM: Noreen Sopwith and Norman Dixon in Ballet Rambert's production of Fokine's *Les Sylphides* at Jaen. The warm colour of the surrounding country makes this romantic ballet take on a new aspect. Photo: Ortega





WELL-DRILLED CORPS: The corps de ballet of Ballet Rambert in *Giselle* Act II.
Photo: Ortega



GUEST STARS: Boris and Hélène Trailine, guest artists with Ballet Rambert, in the *Coppélia* pas de deux.
Photo: Ortega

apart from it. Possibly her years of working in France with various groups, mainly as a guest artist, have not helped her to become integrated in classical productions. Even in the few of her performances I saw with Ballet Rambert she showed a marked improvement in the sensitivity of her approach to these works.

Kenneth Rowell's costumes for this Tchaikovsky-Ivanov ballet are most elegant and this was accentuated by seeing them against a sky-cloth rather than the usual setting. The *pas de trois* is now omitted from the Rambert production, which is a good thing as the music, originally intended for the first act, has never seemed right at this particular point of Act II.

The opening programme closed with Tudor's *Gala Performance*, the subtle humour of which completely escaped the Spanish audience—a pity, because this burlesque of three schools of dance is really very funny and Ballet Rambert still give it with a freshness that makes it a constant delight to those who know what it is all about. Gillian Martlew was excellent as the Ballerina from Milan, which she gives with haughty Italian style that is never overplayed. Selma Siegferts was piquant and witty as the Ballerina from Paris though it is doubtful if anyone could ever touch Sally Gilmour in this role. All the performances would obviously have been improved by some kind of audience reaction.

Where Falla lies

On the following day, visits to the tomb of Manuel de Falla in the Cathedral, the dazzling richness of the treasure there, followed by the discovery in a small church of one of the most beautiful El Grecos I have ever seen, a painting of St. Francis, make a fitting prelude to the evening's entertainment. Between these cultural onslaughts, four hours on the beach which included a seemingly Lucullan feast of Langousta (large Dublin Bay prawns) washed down with Sangrilla, turned out to be the only real relaxation I was to get during my whole tour of Spain.

The Rambert *Giselle* is famous not only because of its most understanding production but because it has given many a young dancer a chance to earn her laurels in this most famous of ballet test-pieces. The latest recruit to the title role is Ann Horn and she is well up in line with her now eminent predecessors. Well danced all through, her first act still lacks the power to make us believe that a healthy girl

should suddenly go mad and die because her swain has proved to be fickle. Nevertheless the component parts of her performance in this act were good. But it was in the second act that she came into her own and her fragility seemed to melt into the Spanish night. Here she was very well partnered by Norman Dixon as Albrecht who, owing to the fact that he had to replace Poole at a moment's notice, did not leave much impression in the first act. His interpretation needs to gain greater breadth, but this it may well do considering how he has developed his Hilarion in this same ballet.

The Peasant *pas de deux* in the first act got a vivacious performance from Noreen Sopwith and Ronald Yerrell; but there is no doubt that the inclusion of this interpolated dance tends to hold up the action and breaks the thread of the story. Gillian Martlew was regal and wholly convincing as Bathilde. The *corps de ballet* gave splendid support throughout.

Casse Noisette is such a pink and white ballet that to appear in black costumes as did Hélène and Boris Trailine in the *grand pas de deux* somehow makes no sense at all. Some

of the choreography, ascribed to Petipa, was very different from what we know and was mainly undistinguished. This was the only thing that I did not like these dancers in and, in a curious way, it looked clumsy.

Although it has been proved that Spanish audiences do not like funny ballets, they did catch some of the humour of Ashton's *Façade* which finished the programme. Particularly did they like the *Popular Song* given by Norman Dixon and John Chesworth. Less blatant and more dead-pan than in the Wells production, this music hall *pas de deux* regained some of its original humour. The ballet was not helped by the orchestra rather roughly ploughing up Walton's score.

The following day, reluctantly leaving the sun of the south, I made a dash across Spain by car, train and airplane to see the Sadler's Wells Ballet in Santander. Two days later, after a final bullfight in San Sebastian, I left Spain happy in the realisation that ballet, and British ballet in particular, has again done more to bring about understanding between two great peoples than 20 years of round-table conferences could ever achieve.

ALFRESCO CURTAIN CALL: Boris Trailine, John Chesworth, Marie Rambert, and Hélène Trailine taking one of many curtain calls after their final performance in Jaen.
Photo: Ortega





CONCERTO AUX ETOILES: Two Fantastic Birds in Jean Commère's setting for Harald Lander's ballet to Béla Bartók music.

(Left) Peter Van Dijk as the Young Man and Yvette Chauviré as the Young Girl in Concerto aux Etoiles. The ballet unfortunately had elements which had been commissioned at different times and Lander was landed with the task of attempting to weld them all together.
Photo: Erlanger

New Ballet and a revival at the Paris Opéra

Reviewed by MARIE-FRANÇOISE CHRISTOUT

Concerto aux Etoiles

Ballet in one act and six scenes. Scenario by J. A. Cartier, and P. Reichenbach. Music by Béla Bartók. (Concerto for Orchestra.) Choreography and production by Harald Lander. Sets and costumes by Jean Commère. First produced at the Paris Opéra on July 11, 1956.

Cast

<i>The Young Girl</i>	}	YVETTE CHAUVIRÉ
<i>The Guardian Bird</i>		
<i>The Queen of the Chimeras</i>		
<i>The Star</i>		
<i>The Young Man</i>	}	PETER VAN DIJK
<i>Fantastic Birds</i>		
<i>Night Birds</i>	}	MM. AUBURTIN, DESCOMBEY, MAYER, DUSSAIGNE, HERAULT, SARELLI

scenario or with the affected graces of the Danish style. Only perhaps Balanchine, in a bare and somewhat dry manner, could have designed the exact counterpoint of movement called for by such music, without the picturesque and arch story-telling of this attempt.

In its present state—there is talk of rearranging it—the work is presented as a very rapid sequence of scenes which are little more than sketches: the Birds, the Chimera, the Milky Way, a Salon, and a Village Fête, which quickly become incomprehensible and hardly allow time, between the changes of scenery, for choreography.

However, we should mention the very beautiful design in the presentation of the Stars. Yvette Chauviré and Peter Van Dijk valiantly attempt to save the ballet with their all-too-brief appearances. Jean Commère's numerous sets and costumes wholly lack unity and add to the general confusion. They do not conform to the laws of theatrical synthesis and fail in creating atmosphere, whether poetic or dramatic.

Soir de Fête

Music by Léo Delibes, arranged by Henri Büsser. Scenario and choreography by Léo Staats, reproduced by Albert Aveline. Sets and costumes by Jean-Denis Malclès. First performance of revival at Paris Opéra on July 25, 1956.

CHRISTIANE VAUSSARD, MICHEL RENAULT

Mlles. Delephanque, Even, Million, Servat, Thalia, Motte, Bertagnol, Berthéas, Audoumaud, Gary.

MM. Dufлот, Jodel, Touroude.

ORIGINALLY created for Olga Spessivtzeva and Gustave Ricaux, on July 1, 1925, *Soir de Fête* is a *divertissement* in the traditional style arranged by Léo Staats. Albert Aveline has just revived it with characteristic meticulousness, and as a result of his conscientious labours, *pas de deux*, *pas de quatre*, *pas de six*, *ballabiles* follow in flowing sequence.

The female *petits* and *grands sujets* are thus featured to advantage in simple yet very harmonious *variations*, supported in some measure by the charming music of Delibes, selected from *La Source*. True to the style of the original, male dancing is decidedly neglected, being represented only by four dancers who are partners rather than soloists in their own right.

The great revelation of the ballet is incontestably Christiane Vaussard, who here has a rôle which might have been made specially for her. More flexible in her movement than usual, she gives free rein to a delicate temperament and brings naturalness and grace to a technical mastery which seems to grow from day to day. With her Michel Renault distinguishes himself with lifts, taken at the full stretch of the arm, *à la russe*, which he performs with facility, combining the faculties of the *porteur* with his known talents as a dancer. Here is new proof of the interest which lies in international artistic exchanges.

The new scenery and costumes designed by Jean-Denis Malclès come at a happy moment to replace the outdated setting of Touchaques. Without seeking incongruous originality, they elegantly reflect the atmosphere of the work: a garden bordered with balustrades, lit by brightly coloured lanterns, a Second Empire kiosk, diamond-studded diadems and necklaces, half-length *tutus* in a somewhat dull range of blue, green, grey, mauve, and a regrettable sugar-pink. To sum up, this wholly classical revival is both interesting and opportune.

More Opéra news

AS a result of Micheline Bardin's indisposition, Claude Bessy has taken over the principal role in Harold Lander's *Printemps a Vienne* (music by Schubert), enhancing this pleasing if not very original work with her charm, freshness and the surety of her technique.

AT a moment when important creations are rare and expensive, it is always sad to record the failure of one of them. And yet the very conditions under which this new ballet was born rendered such a failure easily predictable. No co-operation existed between musician, scenarists, designer and choreographer, and Harald Lander is certainly not himself responsible for this unfortunate enterprise, which it was beyond his powers to redeem.

Bartók's brilliant Concerto for Orchestra, not written for the dance, could hardly accord with a pseudo-romantic and wholly motiveless



SOIR DE FÊTE: Christiane Vaussard, centre, in the new setting designed by Jean-Denis Malclès for a ballet which has just enjoyed a successful revival at the Opéra. It was originally created for Olga Spessivtzeva in 1925.

(Right) Michel Renault and Christiane Vaussard, the two stars who are mainly responsible for the success of the present revival of this divertissement. Photos: Erlanger



Also Madeleine Lafon has appeared in *Etudes*, with Peter van Dijk and Michel Renault. Seldom has this dancer found a better part in which to display her gifts: her indefatigable precision and her flowing style shine out, highlighting the details of the role. If she has not the lyrical quality required for the romantic passage, she at least gives it with a delicate simplicity and without simpering. The *corps de ballet* made a real effort to com-

plement her excellent technique with a discipline which is all too often lacking.

L'Oiseau de Feu and *Les Noces Fantastiques* again enabled Nina Vyroubova to give proof of her rare gifts. In the latter work, Peter van Dijk remains the ideal interpreter, being both virile and noble, while Claude Bessy brings a new warmth to the part of the seductive Nereid.

On July 29 the Paris Opéra Ballet danced at the Théâtre Antique, Orange. Lycette

Darsonval, Yvette Chauviré, Christiane Vaussard, Nina Vyroubova, Claude Bessy, Madeleine Lafon, Michel Renault, Max Bozzoni and Jean-Paul Andréani danced in *Variations*, *Soir de Fête*, *Istar* and *Divertissement*. Some of these dancers, accompanied by Liane Daydé and Peter van Dijk, then went on to Santander, Spain, at the beginning of August to appear with members of the *corps de ballet* at the festival there.

Transatlantic View: 5 London Revisited

by David Vaughan

continued from page 13

was shown by MacMillan's *Turned Out Proud* last autumn. Certainly it must be true that there are young choreographers in this country who could provide television ballets less embarrassing and jejune than the egregious *Frères Humains*, specially imported from France for a recent programme. This so-called novelty was itself five years old!

The Sadler's Wells Choreographic Group, as I have already indicated, can hardly lay claim to be presenting experimental work, as at present constituted. While it is important for student choreographers to learn from their mistakes, however painful this process may be, below a certain level of immaturity these mistakes should not be made in public. Most of the ballets presented at a recent performance by the Group had not reached this level—the contrast between these adolescent *Walpurgisnachts* and the one ballet of near-professional calibre—Peter Wright's *Under Canvas*—made this only too clear. But I do not blame the choreographers concerned for this state of affairs. These apprentice efforts should have been shown in some kind of studio performance to a panel of competent judges. There is no evidence that these young people are receiving any guidance from responsible elders, and in the absence of any attempt in this country at the teaching of dance composition, some such guidance seems to be the least those in authority should provide.

Since activity at any level below that of the established ballet companies is so sparse, one feels reluctant to criticise too sharply any such activity that does occur. Yet it must be said that the West Country Ballet, to judge by its recent performances in London, so far from encouraging experiment, is in danger of setting back British ballet by about 50 years. I do not mean to belittle the very real interest and promise of two of the ballets given—Wendy Hilton's *The Selchie* and Michael Holmes' *Herne the Hunter*—but it is evident that the company's repertory is based on principles that are at best too rigidly applied and at worst misguided. There is doubtless a mine of suitable subjects for dramatic ballets in British folklore, but Fokine and Massine will have worked in vain if there is to be preserved a strict division between the balletic and the folk elements used in their choreography. A company based on the idea of British folk ballets will serve a useful purpose only if it can develop its own dance idiom in which the two styles are integrated.

Out of touch with today

What is perhaps most disturbing in these organisations is that they all seem to be almost completely out of touch with contemporary life. We cannot seriously entertain as contributions to an *avant-garde* ballets or dances on such subjects as a gentleman's adultery with the housemaid or an *espresso* version of Basic Ballet Type No. 3—the café-ballet—much less a dainty tea-shop version of *Black-Ey'd Susan*.

I do not wish to give the impression that I have been only depressed by dance performances that I have seen during a year's stay in England. I have been very excited by Kenneth MacMillan's ballets—these seem to come as

near to a statement of a vital and contemporary viewpoint as we can get, though they are not, of course, experimental in form. I was deeply moved by Frederick Ashton's *Birthday Offering*—it is only right that in his maturity our greatest choreographer should concern himself with the eternal verities of his art. Above all I have learned a great deal about what dancing really is from watching Toni Lander's performances with the Festival Ballet—I hope to write at greater length about this extraordinary artist in a further article. Indeed the potentialities of the Festival Ballet as a company with a style of its own—and that style an essentially dancing style—interest me greatly, though I feel that these potentialities can be realised only when the company establishes a definite direction in its repertory-building.

But outside the scope of the large companies there is a need for all kinds of activity that is virtually non-existent now; certainly there are plenty of dancers available to supply the raw material. Tradition implies continuity: its needs will not be served only by looking backwards and consolidating the achievements of the past—we must also see to it that we are shaping the future.

DO YOU AGREE? Do you think that David Vaughan is wrong in his assessment of British ballet today? Have you any suggestions of your own to make?

The Editor will be glad to hear your views and will publish the best letters sent him on this subject if they are received before September 30.



STARS AND AWARDS: At the Royal Academy of Dancing annual tea at Claridges, Marie Rambert receives the Queen Elizabeth II Coronation Award for 1956. (Left to right) Dame Adeline Genée (donor of the plaque), Tamara Karsavina (who received the plaque last year), Marie Rambert (holding the plaque which has just been presented to her) and Dame Margot Fonteyn (President of the Academy). Photo: Brian Worth



CHOREOGRAPHERS AT EASE: Ruth Page and Kenneth MacMillan relax on the beach at St. Tropez in the South of France. Page was about to return to America to re-start her ballet company, in which George Skibine and Marjorie Tallchief will star. They will dance in *The Merry Widow* and *Revenge* in a trans-American tour. Photo: Lido

curtain up!

Pavlova relics on show

OPENING the Anna Pavlova Commemorative Exhibition at the London Museum on September 3, Dame Ninette de Valois recalled how the great ballerina took the art of ballet to small places, as well as to large towns, all over the world. She said that when Sadler's Wells first toured America the influence of Pavlova was still so strong that it was if she had danced yesterday. She hoped that through the exhibition the younger generation would be able to get some idea of a great tradition.

Many others of today's most eminent ballerinas were also at the private view at the Kensington Palace home of the London Museum—Margot Fonteyn, Alicia Markova, Beryl Grey were among those looking at the large number of exhibits. Naturally there were also many who were connected with Pavlova in her work—Madame Manya (her friend and dressmaker), Walford Hayden (her conductor), and all those members of her company—known affectionately as “the Pavlova Girls”—who have formed the nucleus of the Pavlova Commemoration Committee.

This exhibition of paintings, drawings, photographs, designs and costumes connected with the work of Pavlova throughout her career, from the days of St. Petersburg to her last world tours, will remain open until December 31.

Raised status of ballet

“MY presence here seems to show that the art I follow is regarded, like music and singing, as a part of the English way of life,” said Dame Margot Fonteyn when officially opening the Mayfield Secondary School for Girls in Putney recently. With her characteristic mixture of modesty and good sense, Fonteyn pointed out that 20 or 30 years ago it would never have occurred to anyone to invite a ballerina to perform such a ceremony.

This changed attitude towards ballet and those who dance in it is one of those things that have happened so gradually that we are apt not to notice it. There is not the slightest doubt that the dignity brought to the art of ballet by Britain's two greatest ballerinas—Markova and Fonteyn—has been almost entirely responsible for this changed attitude.

Rambert à l'Espagnol

AT an age when many people think of retiring to an armchair to ruminate on the past, Marie Rambert is still famous for the cartwheels she will perform on notable and incongruous occasions. During her recent tour of Spain with Ballet Rambert, she surprised everyone by plunging into the sea at every possible moment—you just could not keep her out. She is one of Neptune's most remarkable daughters, because she is able to float on the water in an attitude which suggests Valasquez's *Rokeby Venus*.

Perhaps even more surprising was the fact that when Frank Staff's *Peter and the Wolf* was given during the Spanish tour, a lady, speaking excellent Spanish, declaimed the narrative text which accompanies the ballet. It turned out to be Rambert's voice and, what is more, the Spaniards understood every word. It is not easy to fit Spanish words into Prokofiev's music but, as far as I could judge, Rambert did it very well.

Kovach and Rabovsky in collision

NORA KOVACH and Istvan Rabovsky, the two Hungarians who escaped under the Iron Curtain and then wrote a book about it, seem unable to keep out of the news, even when they are making what should have been a peaceful Atlantic crossing from Genoa to New York. They were on the ill-fated *Andrea Doria* which sank off the American coast. Although Kovach and Rabovsky emerged

safely from the tragedy, they lost everything—all their costumes, music and personal and professional effects.

According to Nora, the most serious loss was their address book which, as any artist will know, is a most treasured possession. Anybody expecting letters from these two and not receiving them will now know the reason why.

Giselle all alone

WHEN the Bolshoi Ballet appears at Covent Garden they will present *Giselle* as the only ballet on an evening's programme. We imagine that Dame Ninette de Valois must be smiling wryly at this because she has often been criticised for giving only *Coppélia* in an evening's programme. This latter ballet has three acts and *Giselle* only two, though the Russian version is known to be about 20 minutes longer than the versions known in Western Europe today.

We can imagine the outcry there would be if any other company tried to present *Giselle* alone! Yet it seems strange that ballet audiences should demand so much more than opera audiences, as nobody complains about Richard Strauss's *Salome* or *Elektra* having an evening to themselves and they last for little more than an hour and a half—and without the intervals beloved of so many who love to hear the sound of their own voices!

Ballerina as saving bank

HERE is a story from Doris Chapman, a well-known habitué of Monte Carlo, which is suitable to this particular commemoration year.

“Twenty-five years ago I was staying with my parents in Monte Carlo during the month of October. I used to go to the Casino for a small gamble after dinner. In those days there were few people there and the place was quite dead in the autumn. I noticed a couple who were in the Casino every evening—he played, she did not. The woman was in a simple dark dress with her hair parted in the middle and nobody would have noticed her if there had not been so few people around the roulette table.

"I always started by winning and then lost it all again. One evening the woman spoke to me and said that she noticed I always gave back my winnings so she proposed that I should give her a thousand francs if I won and she would return it to me when I left. I hesitated at first as I thought she was trying to get my money, but when I looked closely at her I thought she had a charming face—not really pretty but much more—so I accepted her offer. It worked well and on the fourth day she told me she was leaving Monte Carlo on the following morning. I asked her to have a drink with me at the bar to thank her for what she had done for me. As we were sitting there I asked her to tell me her name; she looked surprised and said, 'Don't you know who I am?' I replied that I did not, then she told me that she was Anna Pavlova. I got off the stool and kissed her and thanked her for the joy she had given me when she danced and asked her to send me a photograph, which she promised to do—a promise, alas, which she could not fulfil as she died shortly afterwards. This was my only meeting with that wonderful woman."

How to find our past

READERS often ask how it is possible to find out the contents of past issues of DANCE AND DANCERS. Well, the answer is to be found—on the other side of the Atlantic. The enterprising Yancey Belknap has compiled five volumes of her *Guide to Dance Periodicals*, the sixth to be published in late September. These well-documented reference books are published by the University of Florida Press, Gainesville, Florida, and interested readers are advised to write to the university for further information.

Hands across the North Sea

WHEN many companies are closing down, it is encouraging to hear of a new international ballet company being formed. The Swedish dancer Veit Bethke, who will be remembered with Metropolitan Ballet and other companies and more recently as a dancing star in musicals, is trying to form a small group of English and Swedish dancers, to perform for part of the year in both countries. He has already experimented with a revival of the old practice of performing ballets as part of a variety programme. If this company materialises it will forge another link in the ballet chain which binds England to Scandinavia.

DE MILLE AT PREMIERE: On the opening night of Ballet Theatre's Covent Garden season, choreographer and writer Agnes de Mille was in the audience. She is seen with Michael Wood (Covent Garden's P.R.O., left) and Lord Wakehurst (one of the directors of Covent Garden, right).

A few nights later de Mille herself danced in two of her ballets—Three Virgins and the Devil and Rodeo. Photo: Barratts



Credits and one discredit

SOME British newspapers are unpredictable. Recently a national daily carried a leading article heaping praise on the exchange of ballet companies between London and Moscow. In the same issue was an attack on the German playwright Berthold Brecht, who recently died. The article stated that Brecht's communist views must detract from his artistic capabilities.

BEAUTIFUL Svetlana Kassinova, a friend of Svetlana Beriosova, was a dancer with the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet until she strained a thigh muscle. Then she turned to fashion modelling. Recently she has become a permanent model at the house of Christian Dior in Paris.

GLORIA DAVIDSON, a dancer with the Sadler's Wells company, has left because she is too tall. She sailed for Montreal to dance with the Canadian National Ballet. Considering Sadler's Wells has two of the tallest ballerinas in the world, one wonders what the height limit in Canada can be.

TWO more members of the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet recently married—principal dancers Sara Neil and Walter Trevor.

THE ballet babies of the Sadler's Wells company at Covent Garden are increasing in number. Two of its members—Patricia Thorogood and Ronald Plaisted—recently had their first child, a daughter.

happy birthday to...

Alan Woodard	Festival Ballet	Oct. 20
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George Tomal	Ballet Theatre	21
Lydia Lopokova	Famous Diaghilev Dancer	21
Nadia Nerina	Sadler's Wells Ballet	21
John Field	Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet	21
Glenn Gibson	Canadian National Ballet	22
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David Kerval	Canadian National Ballet	25
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Elaine Fifield	Sadler's Wells Ballet	28
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Serge Golovine	De Cuevas Grand Ballet	30
Janet Overton	Festival Ballet	30
Michael Maule	Danilova Concert Group	31
Donald McAlpine	Festival Ballet	Nov. 4
Violetta Elvin	In retirement in Italy	4
Barbara Milberg	New York City Ballet	6
Oleg Briansky	Dancing in America	9
Vernon Lusby	Ballet Theatre	9
Dianne Richards	Festival Ballet	13
Anne Heaton	Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet	14
David Adams	Canadian National Ballet	16
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Marilyn Burr	Festival Ballet	20
Marilyn Rollo	Canadian National Ballet	20
Don Gillies	Choreographer in Canada	20
Ram Gopal	Indian Dancer in London	20

Dancer of To-day



Photo: Peter White

JEANNETTE MINTY

BORN in Wood Green, London. Studied at the Sadler's Wells School. Danced with International Ballet until she joined Festival Ballet in 1953, becoming a listed soloist soon afterwards. Married to Peter White.

Roles—with International Ballet included *Bluebird* in *The Sleeping Beauty*; with Festival Ballet: *Mechanical Doll* and *Sugar Plum Fairy* in *The Nutcracker*; *Fleur de Lys* in *Esmeralda*; *Cerrito* in *The Pas de Quatre*; *Fiancée* in *Le Beau Danube*; *Dormouse* in *Alice in Wonderland*; *Rossana's* role in *Symphony for Fun*; *Burr's* role in *Homage to a Princess*; *Baroness Popoff* in *Vilja*.

ALTHOUGH she has been dancing solo parts for some time it was perhaps not until this season that Jeannette Minty came into much prominence with Festival Ballet. Her first appearances with the company showed versatility and competence but surprisingly little personality. Her *Fiancée* in *Le Beau Danube*, to instance her first big opportunity, was neatly enough danced but its sugary conventionalism faded into the ballet's background.

However her dancing abilities have continued to develop; she can now for example give a perfectly adequate if not sensationally exciting rendering of the *Nutcracker pas de deux*, but more important to her future career has been the discovery of a sense of humour and the acquisition of a new stage presence and authority. It is these that enable her to make a great success out of her principal role in *Symphony for Fun*, and it is she more than almost any of her contemporaries in the company who has the measure of the sly but gentle wit called for by Dolin's *The Pas de Quatre*.

Her development into a mature and attractive personality has been one of the more rewarding aspects of Festival Ballet's recent London season, and she may well be the next of their dancers to be elevated to star status.

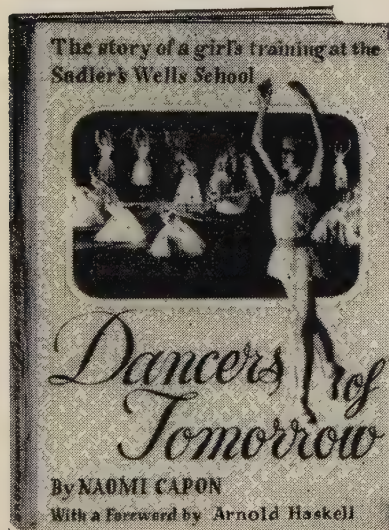
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Karsavina shows the way

NEW BOOKS

Ballet Technique by Tamara Karsavina (A. & C. Black, 10s. 6d.)

"**N**OTHING can be more inanimate than a text-book on ballet technique—except when written by Madame Karsavina," writes Margot Fonteyn in the foreword to this book. How right! For although this is mainly directed at the teaching profession and at students, it contains in its 48 pages more wisdom than in many a mighty volume—and it makes enthralling reading. Her chapters on the "lost steps" of ballet must be read by everyone with the slightest interest in the classical ballet and they will learn why today the dancing in *Giselle* is not always convincing. When Karsavina says that the critics of the Romantic era told how Emma Livry would *alight* softly and gracefully, and how today people talk about dancers *landing*, then she sums it all up pretty neatly. All those who profess to be able to get dancers up on their toes at an early age and within the space of a few months, should be forced to read her opening chapter five times before every breakfast, then write it out a hundred times every Saturday night.

There is no doubt that this is a most important book and my only regret is that Tamara Karsavina does not write more often, though for such pearls as she ever cares to drop will always be seized upon avidly by all of us. P.W.

A KIND-HEARTED ANNUAL

London's Festival Ballet Annual, 1956-57. Edited by A. George Hall. (Gray's Inn Press Publications, 21s.)

KIND hearts, so they say, are worth more than coronets, and while this new book on Festival Ballet lacks the coronets of faultless style, undeviating accuracy and impeccable taste, it has a kind heart. Not only is it written with affection and enthusiasm, but the editor disarms all criticism in his introduction by announcing that the book's profits are to be devoted to providing a fund to help Festival Ballet mount new works. A worthy cause deserves generous treatment, and it would be churlish to over-stress faults in a publication that will give much pleasure to the company's countless fans.

The book contains many articles, including a frank statement from Dolin, and critical assessments from A. V. Coton and Peter Williams, both of which are shrewd appraisals of the company's qualities.

The annual's letterpress also includes the stories of all the ballets in the current repertory, and some rather embarrassing "profiles" of the company's dancers, which all too often read strangely like a serial in a woman's magazine. One cannot help wondering what happens when "Happy-go-lucky Flemming Flindt" meets "Will-o'-the-Wisp Belinda Wright" and "vivacious Anita Landa." That dancers are real people, as the editor asserts at some length, is undeniable, but I strongly doubt whether they are the people depicted in these cosy profiles.

The book is amply illustrated with both photographs and reproductions of the pastel sketches executed by Comte de la Vatine, which were on show at the Festival Hall during the company's current season. As these will have been viewed by most of our readers it is hardly necessary for me to comment on their artistic value. The majority of the photographs are familiar, but there is a series of action photos taken by the Visual Arts Club which one has not only never seen before but will never want to see again.

If, as appears, this book is to make yearly appearances I would urge the editor to persuade someone perhaps more closely connected with ballet than himself to read the proofs, and I would suggest that even in a year-book a breath of adverse criticism adds savour to the praise. However this *Festival Ballet Annual* still has a kind heart and all admirers of the company will, like myself, wish it and its successors well.

Clive Barnes

TECHNIQUE IN TARTANS

Won't You Join the Dance? by Jean C. Milligan. (Paterson's Publications, 5s.)

JEAN MILLIGAN is to be commended for this revised and enlarged edition of her book on Scottish country dancing. Although I cannot agree with the Duke of Atholl when he says in the preface that "this book will be of great value to . . . those who find it difficult to attend classes," it will probably be found most useful by teachers, for whom it is, no doubt, primarily intended.

It contains a short history of Scottish country dancing and of the Scottish Country Dance Society, and it deals in some detail with the various aspects of the dance—its technique, appearance and formation. For some time the author was on the staff of the Jordanhill Teachers' Training College in Glasgow, and the experience she gained there is evident.

My only criticism is that a previous knowledge of dancing is assumed, although to a teacher that would be no disadvantage. The diagrams are not at all clear to anyone who does not know the steps they illustrate, but they do show the correct execution in each case. The notes on selected dances should prove of excellent value to student and teacher alike.

F.B.E.

So You Want to Dance

Schools and Teachers
by E. C. MASON

A SCHOOL IN CHELSEA

IN 1949 the School of Russian Ballet was formally opened by Alicia Markova and Anton Dolin. John Gregory and his wife, Barbara Vernon, then hoped to train a group of dancers and form a small company. This was still possible in 1949, and they engaged Igor Schwefoff to teach. At the end of a year they had trained some suitable dancers, but their company never came into being although their school remained. The economic scene had changed—the dancers they had brought together were forced to disband and take other jobs.

Prior to studying with Nicholas Legat, Barbara Vernon passed the RAD advanced certificate with honours, and imagined that this would guarantee her status as a dancer anywhere. The opposite proved to be the case, for at her first class with Legat she found that by comparison with his pupils she could scarcely dance at all. She had to start her training all over again, but at the end of a year she won first prize in all three sections of the Paris Concourse, and later joined the Ballets Russes de Monte Carlo (then led by Massine), with which company she danced many important rôles.

The war, unfortunately, spoiled her dancing career, and she was conscripted into an ENSA concert party. Later she and her husband danced with the Anglo-Polish Ballet, toured France and the Netherlands with the London Ballet Group, and they were also the first ballet dancers to be accepted by the Ballet Jooss, where they studied with Hans Zullig and Sigurd Leeder.

Although their school at Chelsea is one of our youngest, it has behind it a very definite policy. Its aim is to propagate the teaching of the Russian system, by which John Gregory means the style of dance that came to us from Russia. Nicholas Legat says in his *Story of the Russian School*: "The secret of development of Russian dancing lay in the fact that we learned from everybody (the Italian and French schools) and adapted what we learnt to ourselves. We copied, borrowed from and emulated every source that gave us inspiration."

They believe this to be a dignified, aristocratic style of tradition and artistry, one in which technique is not an end in itself, and one on which the dancer's emotions feed and in which expression and interpretation play an integral part.

Every year the Federation of Russian Classical Ballet, which he and Barbara Vernon help administer, grows larger, and new teachers are accepted. The syllabus is overhauled each year and an annual teachers' course is now held.

In the absence of Mathilde Kschesinska, their Patroness, Tamara Karsavina has acted as President of the Congress for the past two years, giving a special mime class as well as a general class and technical assistance.

In praising the merits of the school Karsavina said: "For years I have been watching children in this country being drilled, but they did not dance. The work I have seen here has reminded me of my own childhood training in Russia. In this school children are taught gradually to acquire and build up technique, not by what I call "sectional training," but by a logical process of dance. This is not a school for the training of mechanical puppets; it is a school for the training of artist dancers."

Their teacher's course takes three years to produce a children's teacher. They do not desire their Federation to become a large and powerful body such as the Royal Academy of Dancing. So far they have only produced children's teachers, and the fact that they have not yet trained an advanced teacher gives some



JOHN GREGORY gives a class

Photo: Douglas Elston

indication of the standard they require to keep their Federation a small, select group—one in which quality and not quantity counts, and one in which a particular style of movement is taught.

So far their achievements in attempting to produce what they term "a new race of dancers" have not been remarkable and, in all probability, it will be many years before they achieve the results they are working for. The problem again is largely economic. Many of their most talented pupils have had to give up classes and concern themselves about earning a living before their training has been half completed.

Classes are not planned or worked out beforehand, but improvised, and notebooks are never consulted. Barbara Vernon terms her classes "choreographic" and illustrates this point by stating that her pupils have no difficulty in picking up any *enchaînement* where, perhaps, a professional dancer would fail. She has found many of our dancers backward in their training, and this is only one of the reasons why they do not care to have dancers calling in to do single classes.

DANCE LECTURE

Valerie Preston on The Use of Movement Notation in Education

Presented by the British Dance Notation Society on July 22 at the Arts Theatre

Valerie Preston's was the first lecture which the Dance Notation Society has given which did not concern itself with explaining a particular system of notation. Notation has been used recently in social work by Jane Winearls, who has been teaching all forms of dancing in junior classes in a children's club, and in this particular lecture Valerie Preston described how she has used the Laban system in training pupils to be teachers of movement. They will eventually work in the fields of drama, dance, or mime. She has been working in primary, infant and junior schools herself, and her work has nothing to do with dance in the professional sense.

Its aims are twofold. To educate the body and increase its movement range, and to develop rhythmical sense, whether the rhythm be metrical or non-metric. To do this she uses

Particular attention is focussed on *épaulement* and rhythm. All kinds of rhythms are used, and as great a variety as possible, but they do not, for fear of making the classics become hackneyed, play excerpts from them in their classes. While basic fundamentals are strictly adhered to, they try to give as great a variety as possible to all steps and movements. New *enchaînements* each day ensure that the pupil will develop mentally. Contrary to accepted views, they find pupils more responsive to a teacher of the opposite sex.

They have two branch schools now, one at Harrow and another at Isleworth. Their classes at Chelsea are at 11 a.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, and at 2 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. In addition to general classes, the curriculum includes modern dance, body conditioning, character, Spanish and *pas de deux*, and they are now able to provide facilities for general education. Extra classes are given by Joan and Rudolf Benesh on dance notation, and by Joan Wildeblood on historical dance, and in the autumn they will again embark on their series of Sunday dance lectures.

cut-outs of Laban symbols which are assembled to form fairly simple and general combinations of movements.

Actions may be led by the knees, for instance, moving to the chest, and then to the head—or they may start stressed on the right side, moving to the whole body, and then to which ever side of the body the pupil prefers to use. As long as these general directions are adhered to, the pupils are permitted to move in any way they please.

From this elastic framework spring the beginnings of choreographic invention, and a small dance, perhaps lasting five seconds, may be composed by a very young pupil. Because of the varying degrees of inventiveness 30 different versions are normally obtained from 30 different pupils, and she has discovered combinations of movements that she would never think of herself, and certainly never ask pupils to perform.

From this and other experience, Valerie Preston refers to notation as a visual aid which she could not dispense with in her work.

The Wells' *Sleeping Beauty*

NEW RECORDS
Reviewed by DAVID HUNT

Tchaikovsky: *The Sleeping Beauty*. Royal Opera House Orchestra, Covent Garden (Robert Irving). HMV CLP1073-4. 2 12in. 67s. 11d.

ROOM has not been found for the Prince's last-act variation; otherwise what is played bears out the claim on the sleeve that this is a recording of *The Sleeping Beauty* "as presented by the Sadler's Wells Ballet under the direction of Dame Ninette de Valois."

This means that, not counting the usual stage cuts made in a good many of the numbers, we are given all the music Tchaikovsky wrote, as in the new Russian authoritative edition, with only the following items omitted: *Dance of the Baronesses* (No. 12c); *Scene* (No. 16); *Entr'acte* (No. 18); *Pas de Quatre*, Variations 1 and 3—*Gold Fairy and Sapphire Fairy* (No. 23); *Pas de Caractère—Cinderella and Prince Charming* (No. 26b); *Pas Berrichon* (No. 27); *Pas de Deux—Introduction, Entrée, Adagio, Prince's Variation* (No. 28); *Sarabande* (No. 29).

Containing as it does slightly more music than the earlier "complete" Fistoulari version on Decca—the *Entr'acte Symphonique* (No. 19) and Aurora's third-act variation (No. 28e)—and considering that Irving takes everything at comfortable dancing speeds, this officially correct Covent Garden performance must be counted the definitive recording of the ballet as we know it in the West.

The orchestra is in fine form, barring some occasional stridency and imprecise intonation in the brass, and the recording is opulent in tone and beautifully clear, a considerable improvement on that of the older Decca. Irving's highly competent account of the glorious music is no better or worse than the general run of performances he has directed for the company in recent years.

There is a great deal of lasting enjoyment to be had from the records—Tchaikovsky has seen to that. But anyone who thinks that Irving succeeds in conveying all the allure and excitement of the glittering score need only compare the dullish performance of the *Rose Adagio* on side two with Efrem Kurtz's on his *Homage to Pavlova* disc. No sagging rhythm there and strict adherence to Tchaikovsky's dynamics—and, unlike Irving, how well Kurtz shows that he knows what Tchaikovsky meant when he writes *con grandezza*!

Dukas, Fauré and Roussel

Dukas: *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*. Fauré: *Pelléas and Mélisande*—Incidental Music. Roussel: *The Spider's Banquet*—Symphonic Suite. Detroit Symphony Orchestra (Paul Paray). Mercury MRL2500. 12in. 39s. 7½d.

UNLIKE his later *La Péri*, Dukas's popular scherzo *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* was not conceived as a ballet, though it has occasionally been turned into one—notably by Fokine, for a charity performance in Russia in 1916, and by Harald Lander for the Royal Danish Ballet in 1940, while Walt Disney's animated cartoon version in *Fantasia* was in its way a masterpiece.

There have been many recordings of the music, but none so brilliantly engineered as this new one. The performance under the veteran French conductor Paul Paray is excellent in every way, though perhaps lacking something of the mercurial vitality of Cantelli's on HMV.

Roussel's suite from his ballet *The Spider's Banquet*, first produced in Paris in 1913 and more recently choreographed by Andrée Howard for the Sadler's Wells Ballet during the last war, is treated by Paray with unusual warmth of feeling in a sensitively played performance.



MARGOT LANDER as the Broom in Harald Lander's *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, a ballet to Dukas's well-known scherzo, first produced at the Royal Theatre, Copenhagen, in 1940.

Best of all, perhaps, is the wonderfully affectionate account of the suite from Fauré's incidental music to Maeterlinck's *Pelléas and Mélisande*, a play which would surely provide an ideal theme for a full-length ballet, perhaps by Frederick Ashton.

Transferred Delibes

Delibes: *Coppélia*—excerpts. *Sylvia*—excerpts. Paris Conservatoire Orchestra (Roger Désormière). Decca LXT5217. 12in. 39s. 7½d.

THERE have been quite a number of recorded excerpts from *Coppélia* and *Sylvia* since these performances under Roger Désormière came out in 1950 on two 10-inch LPs, but none that come within a mile of bringing out so much of the music's infectious exuberance, elegance and charm.

The suite from *Coppélia* consists of the *Prelude and Mazurka*, *Scene and Swanilda's Waltz*, *Czardas*, *Scene and Valse de la Poupée*, *Ballade de l'Épi* and *Thème Slave Varié*. The *Sylvia* items are: *Prélude et Les Chasseresses*, *Introduction and Valse lente*, *Violin Solo*, *Pas des Ethiopiens*, *Chant Bachique*, *Pizzicati* and *Cortège de Bacchus*.

The quality of the sound has been improved in the re-transfer to a single 12in disc and, although still without the greater depth and richness of more recent recordings, this is a minor consideration compared with the rare delights of the performances.

A vivid Daphnis and Chloe

Ravel: *Daphnis and Chloe*. Boston Symphony Orchestra (Charles Munch), with New England Conservatory Chorus and Alumni Chorus directed by Robert Shaw in association with Lorna Cooke de Varon. HMV ALP1374. 12in. 39s. 7½d.

A STUNNING, virtuoso performance of Ravel's sumptuous score such as we can scarcely ever hope to encounter in the theatre. The recording too is little short of magnificent, allowing everything to be heard with breath-taking clarity. It is doubtful, nevertheless, whether the composer intended the "invisible" chorus to make so positive a contribution: the recorded balance in this respect is less satisfactory than on Ansermet's famous Decca

version, with its wonderful "spirit-voices" effect.

Whereas Ansermet's exquisitely restrained interpretation might be said to accentuate the Debussyan impressionism inherent in the music, the more flamboyantly dramatic reading given by Munch reminds us that Ravel always protested that he owed far more to Chabrier; while the links with Rimsky-Korsakov, and his *Scheherazade* in particular, are also brought more forcibly home to us by the rhythmic impetus of Munch's conducting and by the vivid tonal colouring of the new recording.

That such a masterly interpretation allied to playing of so superlative a degree—has Daphnis's flute solo, for instance, ever been more magically delivered?—should lead us to demand a higher standard of performance than we are usually given by our own conductors and orchestras is one of the advantages of this LP age, and not, as some would have us believe, a disadvantage.

Petit ballet

Dutilleux: *Le Loup*. Théâtre des Champs-Élysées Orchestra (Paul Bonneau). Inghelbrecht: *The Nursery Suite*. Théâtre des Champs-Élysées Orchestra (D. E. Inghelbrecht). Ducretet-Thomson DTL93086. 12in. 39s. 7½d.

UNOBTUSIVELY atmospheric accompaniment though it is in the theatre, Henri Dutilleux's music for Petit's *Le Loup* turns out to be one of those ballet scores that do not stand up to the test of being heard in isolation. The rather commonplace material is skilfully manipulated but overworked to the extent of the whole seeming contrived and manufactured. The more dramatic moments here lack the genuine suspense they achieve in the ballet, while the lyrical passages, lent a certain horrid fascination by the spectacle of a be-fanged wolf caressing a young girl, sound merely sentimental. As a reminder, however, of one of the more successful of later Petit ballets, the well-played performance, excellently recorded, should more than satisfy enthusiasts. There is also an attractive water-colour sketch by Carzou reproduced on the sleeve.

The suite by Inghelbrecht, based on French nursery songs, which fills up the second side, is a kind of French equivalent of Quilter's *Children's Overture*.

Music for Moiseyev

Seven Popular Dances from the USSR. Orchestra of the Moscow State Folk-Dance Society (Moiseyev Ensemble), conducted by Samson Galperin. Philips NBR6035. 10in. 25s. 9d.

THIS brightly recorded selection of dances from the repertoire of Russia's leading folk-dance ensemble makes an enjoyable souvenir of the company's visit to this country last November. Just as Moiseyev adapts national dance forms to make them theatrically effective, so authentic folk-tunes are here used as the basis for colourfully orchestrated accompaniments which are obviously designed for the widest popular appeal.

The items played are the Ukrainian dance *Tropotianska*, the Byelorussian dance *Boulba*, the exuberant *Moldavian Suite* and another Moldavian dance, *Jok*, the Russian Children's Dance *Polianka*, a nostalgic Russian Lyric Dance, and *Catherine*, a Ukrainian dance. The fine playing is certainly heard to better advantage than was the case at the Empress Hall, where the sound was badly distorted by faulty amplification.

Dance and Dancers . . . AT HOME

LONDON'S FESTIVAL BALLET

LES DEUX ERRANTS

First given in London by London's Festival Ballet at the Royal Festival Hall on July 30, 1956. Idea and Choreography, Wolfgang Brunner; Music, Bill Russo; Decor and Costumes, Dan Snyder.

"... in their meeting, two lost souls find understanding together."

CAST

The Girl BELINDA WRIGHT
The Man MICHAEL HOGAN
with

ESTELLA NOVA, RONALD EMBLEN,
DONALD McALPINE, LEON WARD,
KENNETH SUDELL, MAURICE MET-
LISS, DAVID SCOTT.

WOLFGANG BRUNNER had the very good idea of making a ballet in which the décor would be partly composed of camouflaged dancers, and would thus take an active part in the choreographic design. He has found a simple theme, inspired by the German poet Christian Morgenstern, showing how two young people oppressed by the strains and stresses of life around them, find their personal salvation in love. The use of the décor to characterise the lovers' difficulties very cleverly makes the "participant scenery" more than a mere gimmick, and adds depth as well as novelty to the choreographer's conception.

The ballet's simplicity which narrowly steers

it clear of the pretentious, unfortunately leads also to a facile intellectual approach which makes the work less satisfying than it might be. The difficulties are so easily overcome, and the future for the lovers is so bright at the end, that the spectator is bound to wonder what the fuss was all about.

Brunner's actual choreography is unsensationally promising. Neo-classical, something of the Lifar-Charrat-Petit school in its ultimate derivation, it has a quality of lean understatement, the confident reticence of which contrasts sharply with the pompous verbosity of most young choreographers attempting their first ballet. The *pas de deux* for the two principals is, as might be expected, more polished than the rest and even here Brunner lacks a personal manner, yet the ease and fluency with which he handles the technique of ballet-making, including the sense of structural proportion he has imposed even on this simple essay, gives rise to hopes for his future.

One of the ballet's credits which can be laid at Brunner's door, is the obviously successful collaboration between choreographer, composer and designer. They have all worked towards a common aim with a common purpose, and this, sadly enough, is all too rare in modern ballet. The black and white squiggles used by the designer, American sculptor Dan Snyder, as an impartial patterning over both the décor and its inhabitants is distinctive. However, the abstract shapes, which make up the scenery, are not well balanced and combine strangely with the cyclorama and the practice dress of the two principals, giving an impromptu look to the entire ballet. The music by Bill Russo, a trombonist in Stan Kenton's orchestra,

is an improvement on his master's voice, and has a morose tunefulness that serves the choreographer well.

The small cast worked hard for the ballet's success. Belinda Wright made the most of choreography that gave her every chance to display her strength and elegance. Her characterisation, which ranged from neurotic compulsion to kittenish appeal, was restrained but telling. Michael Hogan made a virile partner for her, and danced with a sincerity that matched Wright's own. Brunner, himself, also appeared in this role, and although he danced with less assurance he brought out more the character's conflict.

Giselle revived

DOLIN'S production of *Giselle*, which was revived on August 16, is justifiably celebrated.

No production of *Giselle* has yet been perfect (nor has any production of *Hamlet*, there lies the attraction of great theatre), but this is by any count highly distinguished. It is manifestly helped by Hugh Stevenson's designs, which are pretty without being cloying, and stylishly evoke the ballet's period. I must, however, make reservations over the use of flickering lights at the beginning of the second act. These (which are also a feature of the Rambert-Stevenson production) are presumably intended to suggest will-o'-the-wisps, but in fact irreverently conjure up the vision of a stranded party of boy scouts frantically practising morse to wile away the time.

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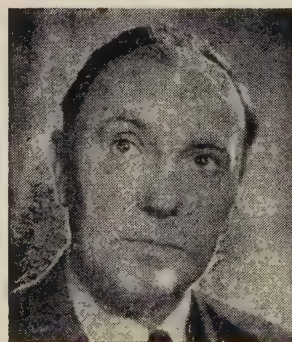
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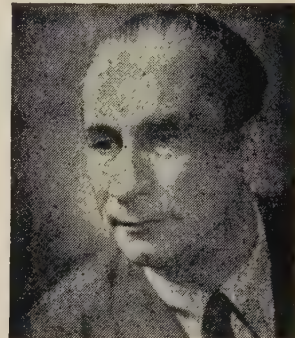
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Giselles to add to its tally of now over thirty dancers who have danced the role in our city since the war. (Incidentally I should guess that the last ten years have seen more interpreters of Giselle than appeared during the entire first century of the ballet's existence!) Belinda Wright, who danced the part on August 16, was commendable from nearly every viewpoint. Her fey peasant girl, with its Ophelia-like mad scene, abstracted and pathetic, had appeal and compassion, while her dancing in the second act was light and delicate enough to suggest a wraith. This Giselle strikes at our emotions with a soft sureness. It does not, as a few great Giselles can, hit tragedy out of the old ballet, but is content to please at the lower level of pathos.

The following night Mlle. Josette Clavier, a guest artist from the Paris Opéra, made what I expect was her first attempt at the part. She was quite clearly still suffering from the effects of a foot injury that had previously postponed her first appearances with the company, and all in all made her Giselle début in conditions of adversity against which she did not triumph. Her portrayal was sketchily acted and her dancing, after all due allowances had been made, seemed affected.

Dolin, who partnered Wright, is still the great Albrecht. It is true perhaps that his style of acting, big, emphatic and unfettered, contrasts strangely with the more diffident, contemporary manner of the young company he has gathered around him, but that is of small account. This is an Albrecht of conviction and nobility, and time has been remarkably generous to it as if in recognition of its sterling qualities. I do, however, wish that he would not embellish his excellent dancing in the second act with the series of acrobatic falls that is intended to simulate Albrecht's exhaustion. An exhausted man may stagger, but he does not, I suggest, leap off the ground like a fifteen-year-old and then, collapsing in mid-air, plunge downwards like a dead weight. This remarkable but unnecessary *tour de force* apart Dolin's Albrecht can still remain as the exem-

plum for the younger generation of *premiers danseurs*.

When Gilpin first danced Albrecht to Markova's Giselle about five years ago it was a performance full of promise. Seeing it again now, one feels that the promise has neither increased nor diminished. Eloquently danced, with precise musical phrasing, his interpretation follows Dolin's too closely for him to achieve personal identification with the role. The time has come possibly for him, presumably with Dolin's help, to re-think his entire portrayal.

Among the rest of the case the elevation of Janet Overton as Myrthe, and the Horatio-like competence of Michael Hogan as Wilfred were exceptional. The *corps de ballet* have danced better, but on the Festival Hall stage they could well be excused for dancing worse.

Fokine refurbished

SINCE Festival Ballet's formation one of its virtues has been its allegiance to the ballets of Fokine. Alone among English companies, indeed almost alone among European companies, it has sought to keep presentable versions of the Fokine "classics" in its repertoire. At first these were the prime responsibility of Nicholas Beriosoff, who was *régis seur* to Festival Ballet for the first five years of its existence. Now that position and responsibility have passed to Serge Grigoriev, who was formerly *régis seur* to Diaghilev and to Fokine himself. Grigoriev is assisted by his wife, the famous teacher, Luboc Tchernicheva. The Grigorievs have undertaken revivals of all 13 Fokine ballets in the repertoire, and this present season was their first appearance in London.

Apart from the first-night performance of *Les Sylphides*, the first of the refurbished Fokines was the production of *Scheherazade* on July 17. The outline of the ballet remains the same, although the famous circular *ensemble* that provides the culminating point of the orgy has been considerably tidied up in detail. The work's exotic orientalism (so

fashionable when the ballet was first produced nearly fifty years ago) is not yet far enough removed from us in spirit to become a classic so it remains a laugh. However, the ballet should be retained in the repertoire, and if we watch it carefully enough, in thirty years time we shall have another classic like *Giselle* on our hands. Marilyn Burr, the new Zobeide, has a nubile look that might well appeal to a Shah, and happily she seems less well brought up than some Zobeides of the immediate past. As with all the principal characters the Grigorievs have added light and shade to the characterisation. Peter White's Shah is now far more impressive a figure than hitherto. Jeffrey Kovel's Golden Slave was rough, tough and vigorous, but lacked the sensuous beauty evident from the photographs of the cat-like Nijinsky in the part.

Prince Igor came into the repertoire on July 30. The Grigorievs have returned to Fokine's first version (at least, one presumes it was the first version) and restored the Persian Girls at the beginning of the ballet. Many of the solos and ensembles have been amended slightly, generally to the ballet's advantage. The production is a good one, and the company dance it well.

The last of the Grigoriev revivals was *Petrouchka* on August 9. Once again the changes have not been startling, although the crowd scenes have been made a little more interesting, the Dance of the Nursemaids has been restored, and some of the production's details have been revised. Once again the general effect is an improvement. Dolin's *Petrouchka* has developed remarkably over the years, and is now far more convincingly puppet-like than during its early seasons. Kovel made his début in this role during the season, with considerable success, giving the part the belligerent pathos of the underprivileged. Anita Landa and Louis Godfrey are both more than adequate as the Doll and Moor, but the score proved rather too much for the orchestra.

Other events of the first half of the season

NORA KAYE AND ERIK BRUHN, of Ballet Theatre, in the second act of *Giselle*. Photo: Roy Round



MARILYN BURR AND JOHN GILPIN, of Festival Ballet, in the second act of *La Esmeralda*. Photo: Particam



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were the revival of the *Grand Divertissement* from *Esmeralda*, which proved only remarkable for the dancing of Kenneth Melville and Jeanette Minty and the wonderful technical display of Gilpin and Burr, and the appearance in *Swan Lake* of Josette Clavier and her partner Jean-Pierre Alban which proved only remarkable.

Clive Barnes

BALLETS AFRICAINS

ACCOMPANIED by the insistent beat of the tom-tom, Keita Fodéba's company of dancers from French Equatorial Africa, Les Ballets Africains, returned to the Palace Theatre on August 6 for a three-weeks season. The programme was basically the same (with two or three additional items) as that which proved so successful at the same theatre earlier in the year—rhythmic writhing, velvety shimmying and impassioned drumming with a *soupeçon* of fire-eating thrown in for good measure.

African dancing differs from the vast majority of the ethnic dancing presented by our usual exotic visitors in that behind its patterns cannot be seen the guiding hand of a basic technique or even style. Possibly one gains through this something in spontaneity but the consequent loss of variety is a severe disadvantage to its stage presentation. Nor is lack of variety compensated for in the music, which normally is little more than a rhythmic background. The clue to Fodéba's difficulties is to be found in the programme note with which he introduces the company: "In actual fact, in our villages, no one dances for his neighbour, everyone dances for himself and learns to dance and sing in the same way as he learns to speak."

The success of Fodéba's battle against these difficulties is considerable. With the assistance of his own belief in his people's culture, folklore and traditions, and excellent taste and showmanship, he has produced an entertainment enthralling for the first half-hour, fascinating for the next half-hour and ending before it has had the chance to complete its declension and become less than interesting.

Many of the items in the programme were narrative in intention, but the story was barely comprehensible without the aid of matches and the programme notes. Nevertheless throughout the evening the company succeeded in conveying a strong, and evidently authentic, impression of African life and art. Fodéba and his fellow choreographers rung the changes on the limited convolutions and leaps of the dancers with vigour, and the décor and costumes by Bernard Daydé and Fodéba himself add traditional French chic to a most untraditional French company.

Clive Barnes

BALLET THEATRE

Opening programme

BALLET Theatre's opening programme at Covent Garden on August 20 was hardly adventurous—*Les Sylphides*, *Fall River Legend*, *Black Swan* and *Fancy Free*—and was little removed from the programmes with which the company has begun its previous London seasons. However, such a programme was useful in that it showed the condition of the company as a whole. Ballet Theatre seemed to be in good shape, far better than on their last London visit.

What a different *Sylphides*, for instance, from the one which opened their first London season 10 years ago! Not so good, certainly, as the recent revivals of this Fokine ballet by the Grigorievs, but good by most standards. Lupe Serrano showed most remarkable elevation in the *Mazurka* and Ruth Ann Koesun gave one

of the best *Preludes* since Riabouchinska. As the Poet, Scott Douglas was very clean and strong in all his work, though the upper part of his body is a little unyielding.

Fall River Legend, which followed, is a magnificent vehicle for Nora Kaye. She gives a dramatic performance of such power that, in the past, it has rather blinded us to the many shortcomings of Agnes de Mille's choreography and the work's unnecessary length. To watch the way Kaye builds up the character of Lizzie Borden, to watch her smooth down her dress, or receive her first flower from the Pastor, is to be in the presence of great theatre.

It has become a tradition that if Rosella Hightower is in a company she should dance in the *Black Swan pas de deux* on opening night. In the variation she showed all her usual virtuosity—her slow *pirouettes à la seconde* are still the wonder of contemporary dancing. She has, though, developed some mannerisms which I have not previously seen in her work and she tended to elbow her way through it all. She was immaculately partnered by Erik Bruhn who danced a variation as cleanly classical as it would be possible to find. Only in his *batterie* was he spectacular, but the rest showed all the aristocratic schooling which is the heritage of male dancers from the Royal Danish Ballet.

There have been so many "gobs on the town" ballets of recent years that it might be thought that Robbins's *Fancy Free* had become dated—far from it. Today it is a classic of light ballet. It is such a well-constructed work that, provided it gets the performance it still enjoys, these three sailors should become eternal. John Kriza and Harold Lang, in the roles they originally created, were splendid; while Scott Douglas, in the role we in England always associated with the choreographer himself, showed that his elevation to stardom was entirely warranted. Only the two tarts lacked the avariciousness and woodpecker charm that Muriel Bentley originally gave.

Battle against décor

TO stand out against the decoration of Eugene Berman, is one of the hurdles which Ballet Theatre's dancers have to overcome in *Giselle*, which opened the second programme on August 23. The designs are very pretty for anything else other than this Coralli-Adam classic. Erik Bruhn, who was such a magnificent Albrecht in Copenhagen, has yet to learn how to fight this battle. He gives such a sensitive performance that it becomes mainly lost in the squirls and squiggles. He looks as Romantic as all get-out and the purity of his dancing is a model upon which all young dancers might well model themselves, but in the first act he fails to project. His second act is better and after four performances had regained its old stature.

On subsequent evenings his *Giselle* was Nora Kaye and Rosella Hightower. Kaye can never fail to give a powerful performance of anything, but in the first act her expression made her look as though she were in pain throughout, a fact which failed to give her madness and death the impact it should have had. Technically her second act was excellent, though again it was not easy to believe in her ethereality. Hightower on the following evening danced the role better than I have ever seen her do. She was wise in underplaying the dramatic scenes, which have never been her strong point. Her second act with Bruhn was the best-danced act in all the performances of this ballet which we saw. Lupe Serrano, as the Queen of the Wilis, almost stole the ballet from everyone. With a little more understanding of the role she could be the best Myrtha we have ever seen.

Apart from giving Agnes de Mille and Lucia Chase a vehicle in which to appear on the stage, I can see no point in reviving the former's

Three Virgins and a Devil. It is a silly work, only made possible by the great artistry of the aforementioned ladies.

Robbins's *Interplay* which completed this rather lengthy programme turns up as fresh as ever, with John Kriza and Harold Lang injecting it with new vitality. Kriza, in particular, was shown to his best advantage throughout the season and in his every role he made us again aware of what a really fine artist he is.

Peter Williams

A pioneer Western

THE programme on August 27 opened with a performance of *Swan Lake* that was neither better nor worse than most second-act versions. A lack of period style, revealing itself in such things as the nondescript setting and the casual manners of the Huntsmen, could only have been outweighed by superlative performances by its principals, and these it did not get.

Rosella Hightower's Odette, though more attractively danced than her previous week's Odile, compared unfavourably with her performance some years back with the De Cuevas company. Her *ports de bras* were inelegant and her performance did not seem to be deeply felt. Such a criticism could not be levelled against Nora Kaye, who made her London début in the role the following night. Kaye's obvious depth of feeling was never allowed to be in question, and she emoted most effectively in a quiet, neurasthenic sort of way; readers of Proust might be forgiven for imagining her one day as Odette in *Swann's Lake*. Her dancing appeared somewhat hard and unyielding. Undoubtedly her spell with New York City Ballet improved her technique, but she is still not at her best in purely classical roles. Erik Bruhn partnered both ballerinas with a curious brand of noble detachment, and danced an exquisite variation of quite beautiful workmanship.

Billy the Kid, Eugene Loring's pioneer Western, is a superb ballet from whichever way you look at it. If at times its symbolism is too clever to seem anything but contrived, it still adds immeasurably to the value of the work, the savour of which remains with one long after the fall of the curtain. It is a ballet that plays on the imagination and can always be recollected with profit. As a pure piece of theatre, if such a thing can be pure, it is engrossing and exciting, with an entirely credible central character. Billy is presented in the round with a degree of success unusual in ballet.

The choreographer is greatly helped by John Kriza's performance as Billy, whose portrayal of the ice-cold killer is compellingly complete. Kriza even goes some way towards disguising the grave artistic error of having Billy as a child in the second episode danced by the same artist as is to portray the adult bandit. Scott Douglas danced well as Pat Garrett, and both Ruth Ann Koesun and Lupe Serrano were attractive as the Mexican Sweetheart, but Fernand Nault did not project well enough as Billy's nemesis, Alias.

The programme ended with the first London performance of Tudor's ballet *Offenbach in the Underworld*.

OFFENBACH IN THE UNDERWORLD

First given in London by Ballet Theatre at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, on August 27, 1956. Choreography, Antony Tudor. Music, Offenbach arranged by David Simon. Scenery and Costumes, René Bouché.

CAST

Madame la Patronne	NANSI CLEMENT
Her Little Daughter	MARLENE RIZZO
A Painter	MICHAEL LLAND
A Debutante	RUTH ANN KOESUN

His Imperial Excellency JOHN KRIZA
The Operetta Star NORA KAYE
A Young Officer SCOTT DOUGLAS
Queen of the Carriage Trade LUPE SERRANO

THE ballet's story, which was given in full in our July issue, concerns inconclusive post-prandial flirtations at a fashionable, but not respectable, café. Mixing as it does the ironic humour of Tudor with the commercial floss of Massine it might be called *Judgment of Gaité Parisienne*.

Like so many of Tudor's ballets it has an interesting pre-performance history. First created for a semi-professional group in Philadelphia, it was later produced for Celia Franca's Canadian National Ballet. Up to that stage it used the *Gaité Parisienne* score, but for the present Ballet Theatre revival Tudor selected appropriate music from lesser-known Offenbach sources, and the whole ballet has been given classy décor and costumes by the *Vogue* fashion artist, René Bouché.

Tudor might have made a brilliant ballet out of this; in the discrepancy between the theme and the choreographer's personal style lies the rich possibility of irony. He could have created a café where Anouilh's generals and Maupassant's midinettes could have met in an atmosphere of bawdy futility. Once or twice he comes close to achieving something worth while, as in a *pas de six* where the dancers (shades of *Jardin aux Lilas*) lightly-heartedly yearn to change partners, but for most of the time he is content to churn out a "closing ballet" of more use to the repertory than his reputation.

One of the ballet's failings is the tantalising

way in which it so often recalls the music, and sometimes even the choreography, of *Gaité Parisienne*. The new music is nearly always inferior to the old favourites, and one's memory disconcertingly provides a musical running commentary to the now existing score. One breathes a sigh of relief when, with the coming of the Can-Can, Tudor's ingenuity or stock of lesser-known Offenbach is exhausted, and he falls back upon the familiar strains of Massine's old ballet.

The choreography is mostly "off-the-peg" rather than tailor-made, but Tudor shows that he can do this kind of thing as well as anyone else. He has a success with the Can-Can in which he follows Toulouse-Lautrec, Michael Kidd and John Huston, instead of Massine and musical comedy. But *Offenbach in the Underworld* is not worthy of a great choreographer, and as Tudor has previously proved himself to be just that, we are entitled to feel disappointed. This disappointment is anything but mitigated by the fact that this was the only Tudor ballet included in the Ballet Theatre season. Apart from a short interlude in Sweden, Tudor has now been out of Europe for nearly twenty years. Unlike Balanchine, Stravinsky or Arden, he does not appear to have become absorbed into the American cultural scene, and although it was in New York that he found fame and recognition, one cannot help wondering whether he does not need to return to his European roots for his genius to flower as it did during the earlier years of his career.

The ballet was moderately well performed, although only two dancers, Kaye and Kriza,

gave the impression that they had got the last ounce out of their parts. Kaye's operetta star, ga-ga and flirtatious, with a great big heart of platinum, was a particular delight.

The programme first given on August 30, opened with a revival of Robert Joffrey's *Pas des Déeses*. This small *divertissement* suggested by the famous lithograph of Grahm, Cerrito, Taglioni and Saint-Léon (which was, incidentally, by J. Bouvier and not by Chalon, as the programme confidently asserts) was originally produced by the Ballet Rambert last summer, and has since been revived by Joffrey's own group and Ballet Theatre Workshop, where it had an all-star cast consisting of Koesun, Serrano, Arova and Bruhn. For this present first public performance by Ballet Theatre, Arova (now no longer with the company) was replaced by Sharon Enoch, and Bruhn's part was taken by Scott Douglas.

The ballet has been changed slightly since its Ballet Rambert presentation, the changes tending to complicate the choreography and to take it further away from the Romantic style and feeling Joffrey originally captured. However it remains a charming, well-constructed piece, with a prettily Victorian atmosphere. The three ladies danced with simple sincerity, although perhaps a greater contrast of personality would have added to the effect. Scott Douglas performed his entries with notable bravura, and partnered all three manfully, yet his dancing was not as finished as Bruhn's, who undertook the role at the Ballet's second performance.

The remainder of Ballet Theatre's London season will be reviewed in the next number.

Ballet Dates

SADLER'S WELLS BALLET at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden

- Sept.
 19 *The Miraculous Mandarin*, Giselle (Beriosova, Blair)
 20 *Noctambules*, Giselle (Fonteyn, Sones)
 21 *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Jackson, Sones)
 22 (M) *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Fifield, Blair)
 22 (E) *Les Patineurs*, Symphonic Variations, Birthday Offering
 24 *The Miraculous Mandarin*, Symphonic Variations, The Firebird
 25 *The Miraculous Mandarin*, Symphonic Variations, The Firebird
 26 *Les Patineurs*, The Miraculous Mandarin, The Firebird
 2. *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Beriosova, Chatfield)
 28 *The Miraculous Mandarin*, Symphonic Variations, The Lady and the Fool
 29 (M) *Les Patineurs*, Noctambules, Birthday Offering
 29 (E) *Les Patineurs*, Noctambules, Birthday Offering

End of season

Tour

- Oct.
 1 Davis Theatre, Croydon (2 weeks)
 15 Hippodrome, Coventry (2 weeks)
 29 New Theatre, Oxford
 Nov.
 15 The Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow
 Dec.
 21 The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden

SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE BALLET

- Sept.
 17 The Gaumont, Cardiff
 24 Theatre Royal, Newcastle-on-Tyne

THE BOLSHOI BALLET at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden

- Oct.
 1 The Grand Theatre, Leeds
 15 De Montfort Hall, Leicester
 22 The Royal Court, Liverpool
 29 King's Theatre, Glasgow
 Oct.
 3 *Romeo and Juliet*
 3 *Romeo and Juliet*
 5 *Le Lac des Cygnes*
 6 (E) *Romeo and Juliet*
 8 *Le Lac des Cygnes*
 9 *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai*
 10 *Le Lac des Cygnes*
 11 *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai*
 12 Giselle
 13 (M at 1.30 p.m.) *Romeo and Juliet*
 13 (E) Giselle
 15 Giselle
 16 *Le Lac des Cygnes*
 17 *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai*
 18 *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai*
 19 *Romeo and Juliet*
 20 (M at 1.30 p.m.) *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai*
 20 (E) *Le Lac des Cygnes*
 22 *Romeo and Juliet*
 23 *Romeo and Juliet*
 24 *Le Lac des Cygnes*
 25 *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai*
 26 *Le Lac des Cygnes*
 27 (M at 1.30 p.m.) *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai*
 27 (E) *Romeo and Juliet*

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- Sept.
 17 Theatre Royal, Norwich
 24 Kings Theatre, Southsea
 Oct.
 1 Pigalle Theatre Club, Liverpool

FESTIVAL BALLET

- Oct.
 8 The Palace, Manchester (2 weeks)

- 22 Alhambra Theatre, Bradford
 29 The Hippodrome, Bristol
 Nov.
 5 Theatre Royal Birmingham (2 weeks)
 19 Dublin and Belfast (2 weeks)
 Dec.
 3 Theatre Royal, Newcastle-on-Tyne

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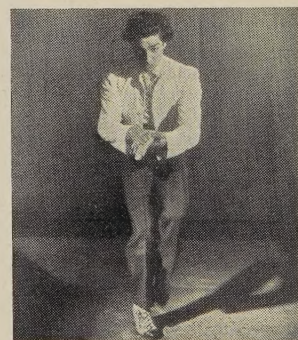
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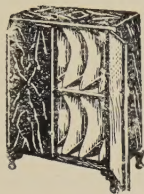
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